# From Detroit to Deir Dibwan:

# Negotiated Identities of

# Unmarried American-Palestinian "Returnee" Girls

# in the West Bank

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April 1999

A thesis submitted for the degree
of Doctor of Philosophy
at the University of London

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## Abstract

This thesis examines the gender, ethnic, and national identities and identity issues of unmarried Muslim Palestinian-American girls who have relocated to the West Bank, with or without both of their parents. In the post-Oslo Accord era there has been a sudden influx of such "returnees" to the Ramallah-area, which is noted for its predominant migration pattern to the US.

The research findings are compared against recent literature on migration and identity where there is much celebration of and emphasis placed on the "hybridisation" of identity, predicated on the new dissolution of national borders. Borrowing from recent post-structuralist feminist, anthropological, and psychoanalytic literature, it is found that rather than deploying singular hybridised identities the girls acted out a number of "identity options" depending on the context and their various identity investments.

The thesis traces the history of Palestinian migration to the US this century, and the varying racial, ethnic, and national identity positions available to the girls in the US and in the West Bank. Notions of "honour" and enmeshed family relations encourage or allow the parents of the girls interviewed to "deposit" their Palestinian identities in the bodies of their daughters. The imperatives of "honour" and the requirement that their daughters marry Muslims, and preferably Palestinians, compel Palestinian parents to relocate their daughters to the West Bank in order to "protect" them and facilitate their marriages to Muslim Palestinians in the West Bank.

Through the girls' practices surrounding decisions to wear the *hijab*, attend university, or marry, it is possible to detect their investment in various "American" identities, which frequently contradict their own and their parents' "Palestinian" identities. It is in the ways they find to accommodate their conflicting identities that the girls devise new American, Palestinian, and Muslim ways of being.

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## Acknowledgements

Just as the theme of this thesis is transnationalism and its impact on human lives, the conditions of transnationalism shape these acknowledgements, as it does those of most anthropological research projects.

First, it must be said that Ramallah in Palestine became a second home to my husband, Michael, and me, and this was due to the warmth of everyday Palestinians made more extraordinary due to the volatile and uncertain conditions in which it was extended.

The support and assistance of the staff and students at the Friends Boys School in Ramallah were key in making my research feasible. Their generosity and welcome not only made it possible for me to interview girls and take part in the life of the school, but also made it pleasurable to do so. Michael Aylward facilitated my first meetings at the Friends and provided me with invaluable insights and daily school gossip. Other teachers and staff at the school, most notably Peter Brundin, Peter Kapenga, Teddy al-Marridi, Laura Sloan, and Hiyam Zakharia, extended their support and assistance in ways that were of inestimable value to my work, and I owe a debt to all of them that cannot be repaid through these simple acknowledgements.

At the el-Urdonieh School in el-Bireh, Sandra Rashid enabled me to meet with her students, and she and Dima Abu Ghosh supported me in doing this project by facilitating my access to the school and its students and affirming the value of this research topic. The principals and students at the Scientific Arab School (SAS) and the al-Najah School, both in el-Bireh, were also helpful and generous with their time and facilities.

In Ramallah, Dina Abou-el-Haj, a former teacher at the Friends, provided me with much insight about her experience at the school and with her students. I owe a special debt to her for alerting me to the existence of her grade eleven Palestinian History oral history projects deposited in the Friends School library. Alia el-Yassir, another former Friends teacher, shared with me an insightful and thoughtful account of her observations and understandings of American-Palestinian students. Both Alia and Dina have been more than just informants, and their friendship from my first months in Ramallah in 1993 played a large part in making Palestine a second home for me.

Mona Marshy, friend and former fellow student at Carleton University in Ottawa, Canada, was working in Nablus, Palestine during the first year of my research. As a Palestinian-Canadian she was intrigued and excited by my project and her enthusiasm fuelled my own interest. Our numerous discussions on what it is to be "hybrid" sharpened my own interest and analysis, the results of which are found on these pages.

Siham Rashid Odeh, a former counsellor of Palestinian-American teenagers in Chicago and now resident in Jerusalem was most generous with her knowledge of the situation of Palestinian-American teenagers in the US and in the West Bank, as well as with her numerous resources and her own research findings.

Shuruq Harb, a "local" student at the Friends School, became a friend herself. Her lively gossip and insights into what it is to be a teenager anywhere, but especially in Ramallah, kept me laughing and also greatly contributed to the understandings I present in this thesis.

Sandra Ballantyne and Ibrahim Diabes were friends and cheerleaders of the best quality. Their companionship over shared meals, gossip, and *argileh* in their garden during the last two years of our stay in Ramallah was a haven for both Michael and I, and we will always remember those times fondly and affectionately when we think of Palestine. In addition, I benefited enormously from Sandra's sharp editing skills, Ibrahim patiently assisted me with standardising my transliterated Arabic, and both Ibrahim and Sandra enthusiastically engaged in discussions with me about the meaning of various aspects of West Bank life that inform my own analysis.

The girls who generously discussed with me the contradictory, difficult, and often painful conditions of their lives in the US and in the West Bank form the heart of this project. Without their willingness to openly share their thoughts, feelings, and experiences, as well as their hopes and dreams for their futures, I could not have possibly understood what it is to be an unmarried American-Palestinian "returnee" girl in the West Bank. A few of these girls and I became particularly close, and I cannot adequately express how greatly this contributed to my work, and how meaningful it was to me personally. I hope that they will forgive any transgression or misunderstanding of them or their situations they might find on these pages.

In London and in Ramallah, Niall O'Murchu was a cheerful companion who kept me laughing at myself, and freely shared with me his own PhD student woes. I am grateful for his support and for his suggestion of the title of this thesis one night on the Piccadily tube.

The support of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (award number 752-94-1077) and the British Overseas Research Students (ORS) Award Scheme made this research financially possible.

At SOAS the support of Richard Tapper and Deniz Kandiyoti played an important part in getting this research done. In particular, Deniz Kandiyoti went beyond her role as supervisor by frequently assisting me in ironing out bureaucratic and administrative matters that I could not have possibly handled on my own from Ramallah. Her skills as a critical reader pushed me to write and think to my best capacity and her encouragement at my lowest moments enabled me to continue the work to the last mile.

Finally, the support and encouragement of Stephanie Ross and my family in Canada nourished me from a long distance. But most importantly, the willingness of Michael Aylward to move halfway around the world with me, first from Ottawa to London, and then again from London to Ramallah, sustained me in the most important of ways. His living example of the value of taking risks inspired and encouraged me to do the same.

## Glossary

*Arabic words are denoted by italic script in the glossary and in the rest of the text.

| | |
|---|---|
| *abu* | father |
| *a'ib* | shame |
| *ajnabiya* | foreigner (f.) |
| *balad* (n.), *baladi* (adj.) | village (n.); of the village, local (adj.) |
| *dabka* | traditional Palestinian folk dance |
| *din* | religion |
| *e'id, a'yad* (pl.) | religious week or holiday |
| *E'id al-Adha* | holiday marking the last days of the *haj* (pilgrimage to Mecca) |
| *E'id al-Fitr* | holiday marking the end of Ramadan, beginning the day after the first sighting of the new moon |
| *fallaha* | peasant (f.) |
| *fallahi* (adj.) | of the peasantry |
| *fallahin* (pl.) | peasants, peasantry |
| *gharib* | stranger |
| *habla* | "dummy", stupid (f.) |
| *hamula, hamayal* (pl.) | village family clan grouping |
| *haram* | forbidden |
| *Haram al-Sharif* mosque complex | The third holiest site in Islam, located in Jerusalem and includes the al-Aksa mosque and the Dome of the Rock, which was built in the 690s over the rock where God instructed Abraham to sacrifice Isaac, also the site where Mohammed ascended to heaven. |
| *hatta* | man's scarf |
| *hawiyya* | identity card |
| *hijab* | "veil", "cover" |
| *imam* | leader of Muslim prayer |
| *intifada* | The Palestinian uprising against the Israeli military occupation of the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and |

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|---|---|
| | the Gaza Strip from December 1987 to the signing of the Oslo Accords in September 1993. |
| IDF | Israeli Defence Forces |
| *Jabal Abu Ghneim* | The site outside of Jerusalem on the border with Bethlehem on which the Israeli government announced they were building a new settlement, "Har Homa", sparking a series of clashes with Palestinian demonstrators and the cessation of the peace negotiations in the spring of 1997. |
| *jilbab* | a long coat or dress made of dark-coloured fabric worn over a woman's clothing, cut to conceal the outline of a woman's body, worn with a headscarf |
| *madaniya* | city dweller (f.) |
| *mahr* | marriage dower paid by the groom's family to the father of the bride, to be transferred to her possession |
| *mandil* | headscarf |
| *mansaf* | traditional Palestinian dish consisting of rice, lamb, and yoghurt sauce, often served at celebrations |
| *mughtarib* | emigrant, perhaps to the West |
| *mukhtar* | traditional village leader/elder |
| Oslo Accords | The Accords are the result of secret, second-track negotiations between Palestinian and Israeli negotiators, signed on the White House lawn in September 1993, that gave shape to the current peace process between the PNA and the Israeli government. Their failure to outline concrete agreements on the issues of refugees, final borders and Palestinian sovereignty and statehood, water, settlements, and Jerusalem has been touted as the source of the process's ultimate failure. |
| PNA | Palestine National Authority, established after signing of the Oslo Accords to administer the Palestinian self-rule areas in the West Bank and Gaza Strip |
| *qawiya* | strong-willed (f.) |
| *samad* | Steadfast, the term used to refer to the Palestinian political strategy/ideology to remain in the West Bank and Gaza during the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza after 1967. *Samad* was supported through financial transfers from the Gulf states to Palestinian parties and organizations, and individual emigrant Palestinians their families, during those years. The concrete outputs of the strategy are the numerous Palestinian institutions, such as universities, hospitals, and political party-origin NGOs, as well as the new housing seen everywhere in the West Bank. |
| *shabab* | young men, in Palestine often denotes activist young men |

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|---|---|
| *shari'a* | Muslim law derived from interpretation of the Qur'an and the *hadith* (Mohammed's customary behaviour) |
| *tatriz* | embroidery |
| *tawjihi* | Jordanian high school matriculation exams |
| *thobe* | traditional Palestinian village women's dress, usually covered in embroidery |

# Chapter One

## From Ottawa to Ramallah:
## The Politics of Migration, Foreignness, and Doing Ethnography

> A class of American-Palestinian "returnee" girls: "Miss, do you *like* it here?"
> Me: "Yes. But I *chose* to come here and I can leave whenever I want."
>
> ...all ethnographers must confront, and...admit that (as with landscapes in visual art) traditions of perception and perspective, as well as variations in the situation of the observer, may affect the process and product of representation (Appadurai 1991, 191).

When I first came to the West Bank[1] in the spring of 1993 to do fieldwork for my MA thesis one of the first women I befriended was a Palestinian-American who was teaching at the Friends Boys School in Ramallah. Thoroughly "American", she was also adept at managing her Palestinian identity in the West Bank and understood the necessity of protecting her "reputation" as an unmarried woman living on her own in Ramallah, but with family in Jerusalem. It was from her that I received my first initiation to coping socially in Palestine,[2] how to comport myself appropriately in public, in a sense, how to "Palestinianise" myself as much as an *ajnabiya* (foreign woman) can do in a context where Palestinian families who have lived abroad for only a few generations are considered "strangers".

I returned to Palestine in 1995 for yet another period of academic research, this time on my PhD, with a husband in tow and with the prospect of living in Ramallah for two years stretched out ahead of me. Michael, my husband, and I left our home in Canada in 1994 to move to London for my course of studies there. After a year of feeling miserable in London, I reassured Michael that Ramallah would be better, more *human* and friendly, despite the Israeli military occupation and the hardships of everyday life in the West Bank. Michael had secured a job teaching art at the Friends Boys School,[3] and for our first few days before settling into our own apartment, we stayed with my Palestinian-American friend who was still living in Ramallah, but now with a husband and new baby.

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[1] Unless otherwise indicated, the use of the term "West Bank" in this text refers to the Israeli-occupied territory, formerly under Jordanian control from 1948 until the 1967 war, including East Jerusalem and those cities designated "Area A" by the Oslo Accords and under Palestinian control.

[2] Unless otherwise indicated, the use of the term "Palestine" in this text refers to the entire West Bank (including East Jerusalem) and Gaza Strip.

[3] The Friends Boys School in Ramallah is an American Quaker missionary school established at the turn of the century. Originally a boys' boarding school, it is now a private, co-educational (since 1991) secondary day school. Its sister institution, the Friends Girls School, is also private, non-residential, and co-educational, teaching students from the kindergarten to grade seven level.

Themes of return and foreignness and "Americanness", and relations with the Friends Boys School, indelibly marked my research experience. I returned to Ramallah with the intention of studying identity issues of US-born and raised American-Palestinian[4] girls who had been brought in their adolescence by their Palestinian-born parents to live in their Ramallah-area villages of origin. Adolescence and the Oslo Accords coincided in the lives of these girls to make it both desirable and possible to relocate them to the West Bank. I examined how migration, gender, ethnic, national and religious identity shaped unmarried Palestinian-American girls' specific experiences and senses and expressions of self. What was particularly interesting for me was the way in which these girls' "hybrid" identities opened opportunities to behave and think in ways different and perhaps more enabling than girls and young women who were unambiguously "American" or "Palestinian". The implication of "hybridity" itself as organic and seamless is problematic, and I wanted to explore how hybrid identities are in fact contradictory and multiple. These girls were situated in processes of constantly navigating and renegotiating their gender, as well as their national/ethnic, identities. What had been certain for them in the US in terms of how to be good Palestinian girls and young American women had limited use in the West Bank Additionally, they were grappling with all of the dilemmas of adolescence that young women and unmarried girls face both in the US and in the West Bank: issues of sexuality, questions about their futures, fantasies of themselves as the kinds of women they would like to grow into being. Writings on migration and transnationalism rarely examine parent-child gender relations and how these affect migratory decision-making, and I began by examining how these girls' coming of age influenced their parents' decisions to move them to the West Bank. Although the girls were commonly referred to as "returnees" some of them had never been to the West Bank before being brought to live there, and most of them had only ever previously been to the West Bank on summer holiday before the onset of the *intifada*[5] in 1987.

For my part, I returned to Ramallah not only as a married woman, but also as an anthropologist. In Canada while I studied politics and political economy I worked as a counsellor. Anthropology seemed to be the perfect bridge between my professional background and my academic interests in development, underdevelopment, and social power relations.[6] As a newcomer to the discipline

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[4] Throughout the text I refer to the girls as "American-Palestinian" when dealing with their lives in the West Bank and as "Palestinian-American" when discussing their lives in the US.

[5] The Palestinian uprising against the Israeli military occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip from December 1987 to the signing of the Oslo Accords in September 1993.

[6] In fact, it seems that many therapists are attracted to anthropology or have previous training in anthropology, particularly, but not limited to, those engaged in cross-cultural work. Interviewing, observation, and participant-observation are key skills in both fields, as are approaches to interpretation of culture and meaning, and an understanding of relationality and identity construction. Anthropology is also beginning to address the meaning of emotion, traditionally the realm of therapists. See Abu-Lughod and Lutz (1990b), Anderson and Jack (1991), and Hassan and Allodi (1997) for some discussion of these issues, both from anthropological and therapeutic perspectives.

I was struck by the predominance of reflexive self-criticism by practitioners of anthropology and the abundance of literature written by anthropologists and others that critically analyse the theory, history, and practice of anthropology (see, for instance, Mascia-Lees et al. 1989; Said 1989; Abu-Lughod 1990a; Lindholm 1995). Prompted by Edward Said's publication of Orientalism in 1978, Middle Eastern anthropology has been engaged in prolonged soul-searching ever since where its colonial heritage and its continuing neo-colonial role are scrutinised, the relations of power between ethnographer and informant interrogated, and its utility in working towards progressive social change is debated.

The remainder of this chapter discusses the intricacies and delicate choices involved in researching adolescent American-Palestinian girls. It attempts to explore how academic/theoretical approaches to anthropological research and my professional background as a counsellor shaped my fieldwork perspective and methods, my "positionality" in the West Bank and what this indicates about notions of "insiderness" in ethnography. Following this account of my fieldwork I turn my attention to describing the context of Ramallah and Palestine, the locale I shared with my respondents for the duration of my fieldwork. The chapter closes with a discussion of the contents of the remainder of the thesis.

## The dilemmas of doing ethnography on "protected" girls

At the outset of my research I renewed my contacts with past and current Friends School teachers. Friends was a particularly fruitful starting point as its prestigious reputation in the West Bank lent my project credibility by association when it came to making later contacts with other schools teaching returnee students. Given that I wanted to observe and interview adolescent girls, secondary schools seemed to be the first logical point of contact and source of information. Additionally, Michael's teaching post at the school afforded me an additional and very useful entrée, particularly with teachers whom I had not known previously, and especially with the girls themselves. One of the most important aspects of my research was the ability to simply "hang out" at the Friends School during the academic year 1995-96, and less so during 1996-97, where I would use the school library, meet my husband, or visit staff who were friends. Since my husband worked at the Friends during 1995-96 it was natural that I was a frequent and familiar face at the school and amongst the students. When a few girls who were not involved in interviews with me, one a "local"[7] Palestinian, took me on as a confidante I began to understand that I had acquired my own position and status at the school, however informal. My involvement

[7] I use the term "local" Palestinian to mean Palestinians who have been born and were raised in Palestine, in contrast to the girls I spoke to who were almost all born in the US, were all American citizens, and spent formative childhood and adolescent years in the US.

with the students was one of the most rewarding aspects of the research, and afforded me a familiarity with the milieu of Palestinian high school life, albeit at a private and prestigious institution. Of course, the Friends is unique given that it educates both local and returnee students, if not in the same classes, at least in the same building. This gave me the opportunity to witness first-hand the interactions and differences between the two groups of students, and greatly contributed to my understanding of how notions of "honour" and socio-economic class dynamics operate differently for the two sets of students.

However, for the most part my research methodology consisted of gathering narratives from specific girls. The meeting schedules necessarily centred on the academic calendar because our meeting point was frequently a school, and because I returned to Canada for a month each summer, thus interrupting the year. Sometimes the girls travelled outside of the West Bank during the summers as well. Thus, meeting schedules were forced to accommodate exam and study schedules, and breaks in the academic year. Other events also interrupted the timing of meetings, most notably long religious holidays such as Christmas,*E'id al-Fitr*, *E'id al-Adha*, and Easter. Finally, and perhaps most notably and unpredictably, my contacts with the girls were marked and interrupted by the volatile political situation in which the meetings took place (see Appendix A).

Almost all of the meetings occurred during the calendar year of 1996--a year ushered in with the first Israeli military withdrawals from the major West Bank cities, Ramallah included, and was concluded with the failure of the Oslo peace process to arrange a satisfactory agreement on the terms of interim-stage withdrawals--a situation which persists to the time of this writing and to which I will return when I discuss the general political context. For Palestinians, including the girls with whom I spoke, the frequent Israeli military-imposed closures of Palestinian cities and areas throughout the West Bank and Gaza that punctuated the year meant being trapped in their villages or towns for prolonged periods, ranging from a few days to a few weeks at a time. Closure tended to follow each suicide bombing incident or other protests by Palestinians against the conditions of Israeli occupation and Israeli intransigence in negotiations with the Palestinians.[8] In terms of my research schedule this represented several interruptions. Most of the girls lived in Ramallah-area villages while I lived in the city of Ramallah, and so we were effectively cut off from each other during each closure, without warning. I also found it difficult to meet with girls who lived in the adjoining village of el-Bireh since their schools would frequently cancel classes for the duration of the closures because the majority of their students

[8] These ranged from random settler shootings by Palestinians to peaceful political protests provoked into violent response to Israeli military attack. Sometimes closure followed acts of Israeli violence. For instance, Ramallah was closed after a settler entered and shot dead a Palestinian child. The West Bank and Gaza were placed under closure following the assassination of Yitzak Rabin.

were unable to cross the Israeli checkpoints surrounding their villages and Ramallah-el-Bireh.[9] A closure could set my research schedule with the girls as far back as a month, and this was indeed the case twice during the 1996 year. During the entire period of my research, there were two major closures and several short ones that interrupted the narrative gathering process, and my ability to meet with "experts" and collect documents.

It was my decision to limit my investigation to girls who were at least in their senior year of high school. I was hoping that there would be some correlation between age, emotional maturity, and ability for introspection and insight, and used age as a screen for "good interviews". However, it also became clear to me from preliminary discussions with some of the girls and their teachers, that girls in their senior year were facing a particularly interesting and difficult stage in their young lives. At the cusp of high school graduation, a benchmark of adulthood in their (American) eyes, but not in the eyes of their Palestinian communities or families, they were at the point of making choices about marriage and post-secondary education. This produced enormous internal stress and tension between themselves and their parents and families. As a counsellor I knew that such life-cycle negotiations were capable of producing numerous personal and social insights. This was an important consideration that guided my decision to limit my study to unmarried marriageable "girls" in order to capture the emotional and psychological dilemmas this position produced.

In order to unravel the strands of the various dilemmas and identity negotiations of the girls, I decided to gather narratives based on a variety of themes, including the girls' personal and parental migration histories and socio-economic class position in the US and in the West Bank, apprehension of oneself as Palestinian and Muslim in the US and American and Muslim in the West Bank, perceptions of gender relations at work in their families and communities, and their aspirations for further education, careers, marriage, and family. To this end I approached a variety of secondary schools with returnee student populations, as well as Birzeit University, with the request to interview their returnee girl students. I also made a point of interviewing young women "returnees" who had completed their post-secondary education and who were working but were as yet unmarried. I met these young women in the course of my research activities and through social contacts. At the conclusion of my research I had interviewed fifteen girls and young unmarried women who represented a range of experiences and levels of acceptance of their situation in the West Bank. They shared in common, although not by any

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[9] Once the closure was over, I would then need to make contact with each girl to set up new meeting times. Telephone service was still not widespread in the West Bank, even with the new predominance there of the mobile phone. Most girls did not have home telephones. This meant a trip to their schools to see them in person, or sending word to them through mutual acquaintances, friends, or their family members. Sometimes girls were unable to set up new times immediately as they were under pressure to catch up on

intentional design by me, an upper-middle and middle class urban background in the US (except for one girl) and Muslim religious affiliation. The possible reasons for this commonality are discussed in chapter two.

However, before even approaching the girls I was aware of the important critiques made by Middle Eastern and feminist scholars of much white western research on women in the Middle East as reproducing skewed gendered and post-colonial power relations (see, for examples, Schick 1990; Mohanty 1991b; Hajjar 1993). As I entered into the research field I wanted to strengthen my own analysis and approach to avoid these pitfalls. Here I took my cue from Rosemary Sayigh (1996), a western woman who has written sensitively on the problems and dilemmas embedded in the relationship between the western researcher and the non-western research community, and the ultimate uses and purpose of such research. Indeed, non-western and non-white feminist scholars have argued that there is no essential reason why white western women cannot contribute productively and significantly to the study of other societies (hooks 1984; Mohanty 1991a). For instance, Mohanty (1991a, 4) asserts that the

> idea of imagined community is useful because it leads us away from essentialist notions of third world feminist struggles, suggesting political rather than biological or cultural bases for alliance. Thus, it is not color or sex which constructs the ground for these struggles. Rather, it is the way we think about race, class, and gender--the political links we choose to make among and between struggles.

Thus, according to many of the current critiques of white, western, middle-class feminist scholarship, the flawed analysis in much of this work is due, not to the social identity of the researcher/analyst (e.g., race, ethnicity, religion, class, or presumably, sex), but due to their perspectives, political analysis or commitment.[10]

However, I believe that we must go further than the notion of "thinking" to look also at what we are "doing". "Doing", then, leads us to the issues of methodology and fieldwork practices, as well as to writing and analysis. My consideration of these issues was influenced by my work as a professional counsellor, and by critical work done by feminist anthropologists and historians.

"The drama of fieldwork," writes Kirsten Hastrup (1992, 122), "as played out on the stage established between ethnographer and informant, implies a degree of violence on the ethnographer's part":

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lost school or work time. Family, school, and work pressures almost always relegated the girls' participation in my research project to a last priority.

[10] Mohanty's claims imply the necessity for a set of shared values, perhaps involving notions of universal social justice. See Lazreg (1988) for an argument in favour of retaining such humanist values.

> Because any scientific discourse must make claims to speak over and above the acts observed or heard...there is an inherent hierarchy in the relationship between the interlocutors. To deny this is also to remain insensitive to the violence inherent in fieldwork (Hastrup 1992, 122).

It is this violence that Sayigh is responding to when she agonizes over her process of field research in a community already much scarred by violence. She highlights the difficulties with the ethnographer's basic tool: the asking of questions. Sayigh (1996, 151) found that there was an "awkward relationship between questions and interrogations....[and] discovered there were no innocent questions."

As with Sayigh in Shatilla Camp, my previous experience of field research in the West Bank had already taught me the importance of proceeding cautiously. In 1993, the rumour mill and gossip networks were working at top capacity, and new foreigners in Ramallah were closely scrutinised. There was always the risk that one might be branded as "CIA", the Israeli collaborator network in the West Bank and Gaza was widespread and effective, and suspicion was rife, not only of foreigners, but also among Palestinians (Abu Tawahina 1997). While I was anticipating the general level of suspicion I had previously encountered in 1993, I also had to deal with the specific suspicions of parents, teachers, and the girls themselves, not because they suspected that I was a spy or a collaborator, but because my investigations touched on sensitive topics for Palestinian-American returnees, such as gender relations and sexuality, and thus posed a significant threat to their various personal projects having to do with the themes of "return" and "protection".

Unmarried girls are highly "protected" in Palestine. American-Palestinian girls, by the very virtue of their double identity require even greater protection than other Palestinian girls, and my identity as a western woman and my desire to ask the girls questions about their lives, goals, and aspirations posed a potential threat to their schools' and parents' endeavours to "Palestinianise" these returnee girls. Further, the questions I wanted to ask the girls about their lives in the US and their hopes and plans for the future were reminiscent of their parents' interrogations, the answers to which, if made public, could ruin their possibilities for return to the US, jeopardise the little freedom they enjoyed in the West Bank, or permanently ruin their "reputations".

In fact, Friends was the only school that required me to distribute release letters to be signed by the parents of the girls I wanted to interview. All of the parents gave their permission, although Aisha grumbled that she didn't see why she needed her parents' permission to participate since she was eighteen years old and an adult. This was just one of the preliminary hints of the disjuncture the girls felt between their Palestinian identities, where they are not deemed adults until marriage, and their American identities where they are adult at the legal age of majority.

The possibility that the girls and the schools had not informed parents of my research was a little disquieting. Unmarried girls in the West Bank are not regarded as adults capable of making independent decisions for themselves. However, in Canada or the US the girls would be considered young adults legally capable of making independent decisions about their participation. Indeed, this was how the girls saw themselves and wished others would see them. For these reasons I suspect that a few of them saw the project, with or without their parents' permission, as a way to strike back, to reclaim some of their own ground, to act autonomously and as adults in a context where this possibility was mostly denied them.

Meetings outside of school premises and hours posed another set of problems. Most of the girls lived in outlying villages, and apart from their time spent at school, they were obliged to assist their mothers with housework and childcare and frequently their access to Ramallah was limited. While it was then newly possible for women and girls to congregate in a few cafes and restaurants just opened in Ramallah, not all parents approved of their daughters frequenting such places. To meet in the house of a stranger was also unacceptable. Finally, few girls were permitted to go to Ramallah alone, and most girls required the accompaniment of a sister or at least a friend. While these considerations were not problems for the Friends School girls, likely because I was the wife of a trusted teacher, nor for most of the young women who were attending university or working, they were certainly barriers to the participation of the other girls. The schools appreciated this problem and generously offered their time and premises.

The authors of another report on adolescent girls in the West Bank write about their impressions of their respondents who live in villages, where the majority of the girls I interviewed also lived:

> We had noticed that village girls had been more shy and timid during interviews....Most probably some did not want to risk doing something [i.e. participate in a research project] they were not sure would be accepted by their parents especially with no back up from the school (DCI 1996, 33).

This unease was first made obvious to me when I asked the girls for their permission to tape-record our sessions. Some refused right away, and others looked so uncomfortable as they granted their permission that I didn't have the heart to follow through. Besides, I suspected that if they felt as uncomfortable as they looked, the material derived from the interview might be compromised. Instead, I took copious notes during and after each interview session--a skill that I first developed as a counsellor when I needed to keep case files. The absence of taped records of the sessions gave the girls freedom to speak more freely and at times to divulge extremely compromising information: without taped records their culpability for their statements could be denied. Even in the absence of the tape recorder, questions about boyfriends in the US and in the

West Bank almost always were met with denials, except from a very few girls with whom I had a chance to develop longer-term relationships or who were free to pursue such relations.

Another Palestinian researcher studying adolescent girls in the Ramallah area recently reported on the great sensitivity of doing work with this group. To illustrate her point she mentioned how she was "thrown out" of one school for asking questions of the girls about "boyfriends". She also noted that questions referring to girls' bodies and their acceptance of them were censored by readers of the questionnaires who insisted on previewing them before their distribution to her respondents. In conclusion, she noted that it is "important to be morally correct" in research with adolescent girls in the West Bank (Mansour 1997). Speaking of social science research in Palestine in general, Salim Tamari (1994, 70) writes:

> In Palestine, and most Arab countries, the discussion of burning issues such as marriage, divorce, youth rebellion, and so on in the popular press is dominated by moralistic and pedagogical discourse. This narrows the terms of the debate and creates a schism between a social science frame of reference (which is scholarly, elitist, confined to intellectuals, and subject to contestation) and a popular frame of reference (which is moral--often religious--simplistic and consensual).

This "schism" that Tamari (1994) refers to is the site on which barriers are erected and misunderstandings abound between school administrators, teachers, parents, even the girls themselves, and social science researchers, such as myself, wanting to understand the conditions of adolescent girls in the West Bank.

Luckily, I was never thrown out of a school, but I was scrutinised, and at times "contained". For instance, at one girls' school for American-Palestinian returnees where I had approached the principal for permission to individually interview her senior-year students I was granted access to them three times, each time limited to an hour or less, and only to the entire group of eighteen girls together. This arrangement ensured that no personal or intimate questions could be asked with any hope of receiving answers that deviated from normative sentiments and values. The school had managed to seem "open" while at the same time the girls' and their families' "reputations" were maintained, and any personal relations I might have forged with individual girls were effectively precluded by the large, impersonal group format.

However, returning to Sayigh (1996, 153) and her soul-searching over fieldwork methods with beleaguered Palestinian refugee camp women, she highlights that it is not only the method that is used, that is, the asking of questions, but also how it is employed that poses serious questions and problems:

> If building rapport between researcher and respondent is only a means of entry, a mere part of the technology of ethnographic research, is it not a form of deceit? And if the

> researcher's developing identity as guest and friend is genuine, is it compatible with probing questions and possibly damaging accounts?

For me, as a professional counsellor, the asking of intrusive, personal questions of strangers was previously only justifiable in the context of "helping" someone who had deliberately sought my assistance under the protection of confidentiality. The prospect of making public findings that had been collected from unwitting participants of my research during the course of intimate conversations and observations seemed untenable, and were boundaries I could not ethically cross. I will return to this issue in the next section.

Aside from the dilemmas around information gathering and disclosure, there remained several other methodological and ethical problems. Ann Oakley's (1981) critique of traditional interviewing techniques is one that many feminist social scientists note. Regarding the paradigm of the "objective" method of gathering data through the use of the impersonal and non-reciprocal (i.e., one-way questioning) interview, Oakley (1981, 35) demonstrates how it "actively and continually construct[s] the 'respondent' (a telling name) as passive." Moreover, her critique points to the dehumanising effect, on both the interviewee and interviewer, that traditional hierarchised interviews have. Oakley (1981, 58) concludes that "the mythology of 'hygienic' research with its accompanying mystification of the researcher and the researched as objective instruments of data production [should] be replaced by the recognition that personal involvement is more than dangerous bias--it is the condition under which people come to know each other and to admit others into their lives."

However, Judith Stacey (1991, 113) wonders "whether the appearance of greater respect for and equality with research subjects in the ethnographic approach masks a deeper, more dangerous form of exploitation." Stacey (1991, 113) argues, "Precisely because ethnographic research depends upon human relationship, engagement, and attachment, it places research subjects at grave risk of manipulation and betrayal by the ethnographer." Moreover, while "[i]t is possible...to discuss and negotiate one's final presentation of narrative with informants...this does not eliminate the problem of authority, and it can raise a host of contradictions for the feminist ethnographer" (Stacey 1991, 114). However, Stacey (1991, 117-8) concludes that "an uneasy fusion of feminist and critical ethnographic consciousness may allow us to construct cultural accounts that, however partial and idiosyncratic, can achieve the contextuality, depth, and nuance...unattainable through less dangerous but more remote research methods."

The Popular Memory Group (1982, 244) echoes Oakley's and Stacey's (perhaps unwilling) assertions of the analytical strengths of using personal research approaches by arguing persuasively that as a mode of understanding power relations and their implications, "[w]hat

marxism or an explanatory social history will wish to treat as social relations or as social classes, these accounts [based on popular memory] tend to treat as persons":

> These worlds are not only "dense", "concrete" and specific but also very heavily "peopled". Social relations are understood through the qualities of persons who inhabit them. Structural determinations appear as relationships between people (Popular Memory Group 1982, 244-5).

It is precisely this mix of "personal" interview techniques and a mode of analysis that situates the particularities of the person within a larger socio-economic, cultural, and historical framework that good ethnography and good counselling have in common. This was an exciting aspect of the research process for me, but I was also deeply concerned about the need to proceed responsibly and without exploitation,[11] as I explain more fully in the next section.

### Between the "clinical interview" and the ethnographic account

I began my initial research efforts by enrolling in a local Arabic class, gathering documents that outlined indicators of the status and context of Palestinian girls and women in the West Bank, interviewing "experts" on returnees and on girls and women in the West Bank, and by making preliminary contacts with schools and teachers. In the course of tracking down a study on the status of adolescent girls, I met an employee at a local NGO who herself was a returnee from South America. We discussed at great length how this status shaped her growing-up and adult experiences in the West Bank, and how being a "foreigner", while nominally an outsider status, also created social space that was potentially empowering.

At the same time, Michael's new teaching job at the Friends School renewed and strengthened my familiarity and contact with the school and the students in it. Almost all of Michael's students were returnees from the US, and he came home with stories about his students and his classroom experiences every day. These stories were imbued with humour and his own affection for the students and his appreciation and compassion for their situations and their abilities and talents. Given my research focus and my decade-long career working with teenagers in Canada, I was an eager and interested listener, and developed my own sympathy for the students he spoke about and to whom he introduced me. Upon one of these introductions a student actually volunteered herself as a subject for my research. Her accounts displayed a sensitive grasp of how ethnicity, class, and gender relations shaped her identity as an American-Palestinian Muslim girl

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[11] Having said this, as I have already outlined and will explore further in the next section, some critics argue that it is impossible to construct an ethnographic research relationship without elements of exploitation on both the researcher's and the informant's part (Hale 1991; Stacey 1991; Sayigh 1996; Wolf 1996).

as she frankly discussed her problems fitting in both in the US and in the West Bank, her family history and dynamics, and her ambitions to return to the US for her university education.

It was my understanding of the situations of these two respondents that shaped much of my initial analysis of the returnee girls from whom I later gathered narratives. Their stories were full of insight into how their identities were partial, fragmented, and contingent. They spoke candidly about tactical identity manoeuvres and how class and locale shaped their identity options. For instance, the first young woman spoke about how being a "foreigner" in her West Bank village afforded her room to be outspoken, independent from her brothers, and to live on her own. Her neighbours excused these behaviours on the basis of her status as an outsider, even though she had lived in the West Bank for most of her life. Additionally, her move to Ramallah allowed her some scope for behaviour that was unacceptable in her village setting. Yet I was at the same time concerned about the exploitative potential embedded in the research process, as outlined by Stacey (1991). Many of the teachers I spoke to felt that returnee girls would welcome a safe venue in which to vent and explore some of their feelings about their situations, especially given the fact that the schools lacked adequate counselling services. However, I was adamant that I not engage in counselling relationships with the girls. It seemed then, as it still seems to me now, that it would be unethical to use my counselling skills to encourage interview participants to divulge intimate emotional information in a situation where I, not they, would be the primary beneficiary.

Here then, we return to the contradictions highlighted by Oakley (1981) and Stacey (1991). On the one hand, I was seeking interview material of the quality that I had already received through my two previous respondents. In short, I wanted to engage in interview processes that did yield very personal and intimate information. On the other hand, I could not overcome my conviction that qualitative feminist methodology advocated by Oakley (1981) and others could result in exploitative research relationships, as problematised by Stacey (1991). I decided to take my cue from Sayigh (1996) who, in order to navigate her own way through these problems, chose to gather oral histories from Palestinian camp women as her research method. This allowed the women the "free[dom] to choose what to say and what to omit...[and] remove[d] intrusive researcher questions" (Sayigh 1996, 156). Nonetheless, this freedom was limited: "Individual Shateela women could (and some did) refuse my invitations to record but this was the limit of their power--there was no collective forum in which they could question the project, or modify it, or suggest speakers, or join in carrying it out" (Sayigh 1996, 157).[12] Sayigh also points to the problem of reciprocity. Although she aimed at honest and non-hierarchical relations with the

[12] Sayigh (1996, 157) also points to the problem of "consent" when "studying down".

women she asked to participate, this type of project "changes little in life story givers' lives unless incorporated into a larger, collectively directed project" (Sayigh 1996, 158).

I hoped that by following the same method I could afford the girls the same space to avoid issues or topics on which they did not choose to focus, or to choose not to participate at all. At the same time, both the girls and I were acutely conscious that their participation in my research project could do nothing to concretely alleviate the difficulties of their specific situations. Nonetheless, almost all of the girls expressed the desire to participate in a project that offered the slim hope that their situations and themselves might be better understood by their parents, teachers and schools, and the larger Palestinian community. One or two, however, seemed to use the interviews to bolster their image as obedient students and dutiful daughters, grateful to have been brought back to Palestine to learn about their heritage. These girls formed a distinct minority, and even then, cracks showed through their performances or details about their history revealed very interesting dynamics at play. Some of the girls took the interviews as an opportunity to "unload", to deposit secrets and feelings for which they could not otherwise find an outlet. Only a few of the girls and young women made use of the interviews in this way. But when one respondent, after our sessions were concluded and she was given an account of the material to fact-check and edit, decided that she did not want any of the material used, I realised that I needed to try to find ways to contain the narratives in order to prevent any other respondents from feeling as naked as she did at their conclusion. My experience with this young woman was a healthy corrective to Oakley (1981) and a validation of Stacey who claims that "feminist" interviewing and research techniques are potentially more exploitative of the research subject than more conventional or traditional social science methodologies (1991) (also see Ribbens 1989; Wolf 1996, 19-21). Her story is not included in this thesis.

Instead of engaging in a totally free flow of information that was almost entirely dictated by the respondent, I began exploring ways of guiding the narratives. It was my feeling that if I acted to structure our encounters along lines of which I made respondents aware before they began their involvement this would continue to allow my interviewees some choice over what to discuss with me but would also, I hoped, prevent respondents from feeling too exposed at the conclusion of the encounter. My meetings with the young woman mentioned above took place over many hours and months of intensive discussion. This represented a significant time and energy investment on my part, and I could not afford to have my other respondents decide at the end of the process that they did not want their narratives used. While I learned much from my discussions with this young woman, and they strongly inform my analysis, I also needed to write my thesis. In making decisions around altering my research strategy I did not entertain the idea of not sharing my accounts of our meetings with my respondents for their editorial responses. I felt that this input was important for accuracy's sake. However, my choice to provide written

accounts to the young women was not just a matter of courtesy and a means of seeking to achieve the highest degree of accuracy possible, especially in the absence of taped accounts. It was also a choice strategically taken and one derived from a set of ethical concerns. It was important to me that the girls felt they had choice and decision-making power in my research endeavour, no matter how limited, given their current situations where they mostly felt deprived of participation in many decisions affecting and shaping their lives. I also hoped that if the girls knew that they had a second chance to edit their responses to my questions they might feel more comfortable to speak openly and honestly. I have no way to assess whether or not their editing privileges addressed or met either of these concerns or sets of needs. The fact that almost half of the girls failed to utilise their editing privileges suggests to me that at least for some of them, these concerns were more real for me than for them.

While editing privileges gave the girls power over their portions of the data for my thesis, it did not grant them any control over my authorial and interpretive function and privilege. This was impossible to grant for several reasons. First, my intention, with the exception of one girl (and this plan was abandoned in the writing stage), was never to use any of the girls' stories in their entirety as case studies. Thus, to provide them with a fully interpreted account of their lives would be to present them with a false picture of how snippets of their lives were to be included in my writing (*cf.* Borland 1991). I deliberately chose to write up my thesis along thematic rather than in-depth case study lines to protect my respondents' identities and to avoid the unavoidable brutalities involved in the interpretation of the lives and identities of respondents. Even so, I am very much aware that the girls might not share my interpretations of their "identity options", and have tried to be careful to indicate this in the text of my thesis wherever appropriate, and am emphasising this fact now. However, to not offer an interpretation of my own, to leave interpretive tasks solely to those being interviewed, would reduce my role to one of simple recorder, and would run the risk of "reduc[ing] judgements about reality to their face value--to *beliefs* about reality" that "disconnects the formation of those views and the language expressing them from the historical and social context which shapes them" (Jones 1993, 208). Indeed, borrowing from Judith Butler (1990a), Kathleen Jones (1993, 209-10) argues, "if the subject's/performer's actions are more full of meaning than the dominant discourse permits us to recognize, it is important to acknowledge that they may be more full of meaning than the actor can recognize or control." Finally, I would like to here offer my interpretations of the girls' identities in the spirit of engaging in "public conversation" about the situation of unmarried American-Palestinian returnee girls in the West Bank rather than as an "expert" providing an authoritative and conclusive (and thus closed) account (Jones 1993, 190-3).

It was after my first set of interviews were underway with girls from the Friends School that I began to be able to detect common themes across their stories. Based on this information I was

able to construct a guided narrative format that combined a focus on specific themes with a "life story" framework in which to insert those themes. It was at this juncture that my interview method shifted from gathering unstructured in-depth personal oral histories to discussing with girls their personal history context and main events but with a focus on issues they were currently facing. As a result, I combined oral history gathering and interviewing. I briefly informed each girl about the narrative-gathering process and gave examples of the sorts of information I was interested in discussing with her, and explained that I would like to understand how these themes worked within the totality of each girl's life. To this end we discussed their family lives and histories, the main events in their lives in the US and in the West Bank, and how they assessed their socio-economic positions in the US. I encouraged them to elaborate on the difficulties of being Palestinian in the US, American in the West Bank, and Muslim and female in both places, and to share their aspirations for their future education, career, and marriage. Very often the "identity" questions flowed quite naturally out of their own narratives about their "life histories" and their recounting of events that shaped their current situations in the West Bank. In this instance, interviewing the girls was similar to preliminary assessment counselling sessions used to gain a basic appreciation of a client and his/her presenting problems and to lay the groundwork for a deeper rapport. I felt that my counselling skills were put to fruitful and good use in my research. It was clear to me as I interviewed a variety of girls that only the most self-aware and those feeling the most urgency to discuss their situation required no particular framework on which to hang their stories. Most of the girls I spoke to seemed to grope around trying to search for clues about what sort of information I wanted from them. This loose structure helped me to guide them through the interview process until it began to take on a life of its own and needed no prompting. On the other hand, in the cases of girls who were bursting to talk, the interview framework imposed a discipline on them and on me, to focus on the issues I thought at the time were important to my research. No doubt I deprived myself of much interesting and even useful information. Yet, I was nervous about the implications should the girls divulge "too much", concerned that they might feel exploited or exposed at the conclusion of the process. At the end of our conversations I duly provided each girl with a written transcript of our discussions so that they might correct or omit any details they wished, and it is these documents from which I draw the bulk of my material.

Despite, and perhaps because of, the intimate quality of many of the discussions with several of the girls I was made sharply aware of the differences in the levels of social latitude and opportunity that my respondents and I enjoyed or had access to. Although we shared cultural similarities as fellow North Americans, other differences based on class, nationality, generation, marital status, and culture impeded the possibility of pursuing an ideal "feminist process" with the young women I spoke to where authentic friendship is the defining feature of the relationship

(Oakley 1981).[13] Aside from my caution about the exploitative possibilities embedded in this type of rapport (Stacey 1991), I am sympathetic with Sondra Hale (1991) who writes about the difficulties in her experience of attempting to conduct "feminist" interviews with Sudanese women who did not share her values where honesty and openness would prevail and enhance the research endeavour. For instance, it was only with a very few girls that I felt free to share my atheism and beliefs that women should have complete autonomy over their bodies and sexualities. To indiscriminately share this information with every young woman I interviewed could have led to the destruction of my good reputation in the community at large and amongst school administrators and teachers, and could have also threatened and offended some of the girls with whom I spoke. In one school, I was told by a teacher that another local teacher's announcement to her class that she was an atheist resulted in the students' general dislike for and discomfort with her, despite her interest in their problems and her good teaching skills. Besides, it is not realistic to expect that friendship is a desirable or possible evolution from a research relationship (Ribbens 1989, 585-6; Wolf 1996), and instead it is transparency that should be the defining feature of research methods. Hale (1991, 133-4; also see Ribbens 1989, 587) concludes by suggesting that maintaining a small distance between interviewer and respondent, rather than inserting intersubjectivity in the interview process, is the most honest stance and one that protects each party from false illusions of mutuality:

> It is possible, however, that the small but significant degree of difference demanded in conventional participant-observation shields the interactional and intersubjective interpreter of another woman's life from false assumptions of mutuality. At the same time, in the "feminist interview", for the most part, the closeness and intersubjectivity remain artificial and temporary, frustrating expectations and potentially creating tensions...

There were other limitations to developing relationships based on mutuality with the girls that were based on our age and lifecycle differences. During the course of my research, especially in the earlier stages, I suffered from much uncertainty and doubt about the adequacy of my research methods, entertaining the usual qualms that I was not doing enough (*cf.* Abu-Lughod 1986). Comfortable with gathering documents and facilitating individual meetings, since these methods were familiar to me from my previous professional and academic work, I was much less comfortable with and had little access to participant-observation as a method (except as it is used

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[13] Ideal "feminist process" refers to qualitative research or interview methods that are based on reciprocal intimacy and friendship between researcher and subject. Oakely (1981) and Patai (1991) are concerned about the dehumanising and exploitative nature of much traditional social science research where the subject is treated as a repository of data available to be mined. Feminist researchers, they suggest, need to explore other ways of conducting research that incorporate feminist values of recognition, consideration, and inclusion of mutual respect and the personal dimension in professional endeavours and the political arena. Key here is the effort to undermine unequal power relations in the research relationship through mutual trust and sharing, similar to an intimate personal friendship. Stacey (1991), as I have mentioned already, questions whether this type of approach might not lead to even further exploitation of the research

in counselling sessions). Barred by age and residence from "participating" in their everyday social lives, I had to content myself with regular visits to the Friends School and the few opportunities presented to me to visit the girls' homes and attend school parties and events. I vicariously participated in classroom and extra-curricular activities facilitated by Michael and other teachers at the Friends, shamelessly mining their accounts as I would pieces of particularly juicy gossip. None of the girls, or other American-Palestinian families, lived in my downtown Ramallah neighbourhood, or my later neighbourhood in old Ramallah (although our second landlords were returnees from the US). No doubt I would have learned much more about the lives of American-Palestinians had I lived in Deir Dibwan or some other village noted for its "American" population. Although it is common to hear English spoken on the streets of Ramallah, there was no one place available for American-Palestinian teenagers to "hang out" during the course of my fieldwork (although the year I returned to London to complete my degree a new US-style fast food restaurant complex opened in downtown Ramallah where I have since seen many American-Palestinian teenagers socialising). The girls I spoke to said that much of their social time was spent at school, or at girlfriends' or cousins' homes in their villages, to which I had little to no access. Sometimes they were permitted to go accompanied to Ramallah or even occasionally to Jerusalem to shop or go to the McDonald's on the "west-side" (the Israeli side of Jerusalem). I was never asked to accompany them on such trips, and I think that most of them would have found my presence an intrusion or a constraint on their enjoyment. These and other factors having to do with my own positionality limited my opportunities to be a participant-observer, an issue that I will explore in the next section.

Nonetheless, I have no doubt that my interviewing skills, developed through years of counselling teenagers, facilitated our meetings in such a way as to encourage the girls to speak fairly openly about their thoughts and feelings about themselves, their histories, and their current contexts in a way that made up for my absence in their daily routines (*cf.* Ribbens 1989). However, it was also within this format that I defined a strict boundary for myself, between my skills as a counsellor and my research interests as a PhD candidate. As a trained counsellor I share therapist Dana Jack's (Anderson, Jack 1991, 19) cautions:

> As a researcher, I have learned that critical areas demanding attention are frequently those where I think I already know what the woman is saying. This means I am already appropriating what she says to an existing schema, and therefore I am no longer really listening to her. Rather, I am listening to how what she says fits into what I think I already know. So I try to be very careful to ask each woman what she means by a certain word, or to make sure that I attend to what is missing, what literary critics call the "presence of absence" in women's texts.

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subject, and as I discuss immediately in this section, this type of "feminist process" is problematic in terms of the dynamics and expectations it sets up between researcher and subject.

In fact, this discipline makes not only for good anthropology, but also for good therapy. But Kathryn Anderson and Jack (1991, 25-5) conclude with an important differentiation between research and therapy, one that I took on board for myself:

> Oral history interviews are unique in that the interaction of researcher and subject creates the possibility of going beyond the conventional stories of women's lives, their pain and their satisfactions, to reveal experience in a less culturally edited form. But despite the value of this focus on the oral history interview in its dynamic, interactive form, we must offer one word of caution. The researcher must always remain attentive to the moral dimension of interviewing and aware that she is there to follow the narrator's lead, to honor her integrity and privacy, not to intrude into areas that the narrator has chosen to hold back. This is another part of the specific kind of readiness the researcher brings to the interview: a readiness to be sensitive to the narrator's privacy while, at the same time, offering her the freedom to express her own thoughts and experiences, and listening for how that expression goes beyond prevailing concepts.

As a counsellor, the people I worked with paid me to highlight for them where they were "holding back" and to explore that with them. As an anthropologist I could not ethically do this, and I believe that this is where the boundary lies between anthropology and "savage social therapy" (Chanfrault-Duchet 1991, 89; Patai 1991, 148).

What value, then, do oral narratives, gathered as unintrusively and consensually as possible, have for the anthropologist (or, indeed, for the counsellor) and their subjects or clients? As I will demonstrate in chapters three, four, and five, Abu-Lughod and Catherine Lutz (1990a, 1-2) argue that anthropological approaches to emotion and "emotion talk" are not just, or even necessarily, about internal states, but are also indicative of "issues of sociability and power" which can offer insight into "the politics of everyday life". Abu-Lughod and Lutz (1990a, 14) adopt a Foucauldian notion of discourse, suggesting that "contextualizing emotion discourse" shows "that power seems even more thoroughly bound up with such discourses":

> We look particularly for the ways power relations determine what can, cannot, or must be said about self and emotion, what is taken to be true or false about them, and what only some individuals can say about them. The real innovation is in showing how emotion discourses establish, assert, challenge, or reinforce power or status differences.

Finally, we must keep in mind the problem that analysing discourse frequently "promotes a lingering concern with meaning, which always implies that it is the referents that are the object of study rather than the speakers" (Abu-Lughod 1990b, 27). The real value in utilising discourse analysis is "[t]o study the ways emotion discourses are used, to focus on practice rather than meaning, and to examine discourses rather than their putative referents" (Abu-Lughod 1990b, 28).

Julian Henriques et al. (1984, 217) provide the links between the type of narrative-gathering I used in my research, Abu-Lughod and Lutz's ideas about "emotion talk", and "talk therapy" in

their exploration of the utility of psychoanalytic theory to avoid the determinism of much current psychological thought on human behaviour and society. They believe that it is possible to overcome the universalising tendencies of western psychoanalytic theory (particularly Freud and Lacan) by producing a historically specific understanding of the centrality of the unconscious to subjective change: "What we are proposing is to replace Lacan's emphasis on a universal and timeless symbolic order with an emphasis on discursive relations, viewed in their historical specificity." A focus on discourse, rather than Lacanian phallic Symbolic orders, is capable of producing "a theory which combines these sets of relations between power, knowledge and desire within the same theoretical framework [and] would combine two often unfortunately separate struggles: the changing of subjects and the changing of circumstances" (Henriques et al. 1984, 226). This is particularly relevant to my discussion in chapter five where I analyse how the girls' subjectivity is shaped and transformed according to their insertion in a variety of competing and sometimes contradictory discourses and engagement in relations with family and community.

The notion of discourse that Abu-Lughod, Lutz, and Henriques et al. use is derived from Michel Foucault. According to Foucault (1981, 52), "in every society the production of discourse is at once controlled, selected, organised and redistributed by a certain number of procedures whose role is to ward off its powers and dangers, to gain mastery over its chance events, to evade its ponderous, formidable materiality." Central to this production of discourse are "procedures of exclusion", where with "the taboo on the object of speech, and the ritual of the circumstances of speech, and the privileged or exclusive right of the speaking subject, we have the play of three types of prohibition which intersect, reinforce or compensate for each other, forming a complex grid which changes constantly....where the grid is tightest...[is in the area of] sexuality and politics" (Foucault 1981, 52). Finally, "discourse is not simply that which manifests (or hides) desire--it is also the object of desire; and since, as history constantly teaches us, discourse is not simply that which translates struggles or systems of domination, but is the thing for which and by which there is struggle, discourse is the power which is to be seized" (Foucault 1981, 52-3). "Talk therapy", then, is about empowerment, and some forms of oral narrative research can also play a part in providing an enabling context with the people with whom we, as researchers, speak. When girls spoke to me about their hopes for a university education in the US or for their future marriages, in the process they sometimes began to formulate strategies through which they could begin to realise their ambitions. Other times they sought concrete advice or feedback on how to apply for university admissions or scholarships, how to "interview" a potential fiancé, how to negotiate with their husbands-to-be, or how to approach their parents about their own desires for their futures.

Again, drawing on Foucauldian notions of discourse, the Popular Memory Group writes about the "silencing" effect that "dominant memory" has. "Dominant memory" is "produced in the course of...struggles" in "the field of public [official, institutional, commercial, media, etc.] representations of history" and is in counterposition to "[a] knowledge of past and present [that] is also produced in the course of everyday life....everyday talk and in personal comparisons and narratives [and 'recorded in certain intimate cultural forms' such as letters, diaries, photograph albums, etc.]" (Popular Memory Group 1982, 207-210). This "popular" memory, however, cannot be analysed in isolation. Rather,

> [i]t is a necessarily relational study. It has to take in the dominant historical representations in the public field as well as attempts to amplify or generalize subordinated or private experiences....Private memories cannot, in concrete studies, be readily unscrambled from the effects of dominant historical discourses. It is often these that supply the very terms by which a private history is thought through (Popular Memory Group 1982, 211).

In my respondents' cases, "dominant memory" is constructed by those sources deemed more authoritative than they are, which is almost everyone: parents, elders, and other family members, teachers, principals, and others in the education profession, counsellors, newspapers, and so on. The girls very clearly saw their participation in the research project as a rare chance to put their own versions of events and perspectives on record. While I draw extensively on other "dominant memory" sources, some of which are collective such as diasporic constructions of what Palestine is and what it is to be Palestinian, these are used only to complement the girls' own accounts of their experiences and impressions, feelings and hopes.

We must also consider the context of the research relationship and the context in which the research process takes place, bringing to the forefront the issue of positionality. This necessarily frames, and to some extent shapes, the narratives or other ethnographic material gathered. Here I am reminded of Hastrup's (1992, 122-3) considerations of the ethnographic encounter:

> Both parties are engaged in a joint creation of selfness and otherness, but the apparent symmetry at the level of dialogue is subsumed by a complicated asymmetry: the ethnographic project systematically violates the other's project....While perhaps enshrined in mutual friendship and even affection, the ethnographic dialogue is twisted by the fact that the ethnographer's questions are unsolicited, and that they will of necessity shape the answers. The ethnographic material is doubly mediated by our own presence and the informant's response to that.

Given the truth of this reflection it is impossible to ignore the dynamics of the relationship between researcher and respondent, and the situatedness of the researcher her/himself, in that these factors condition the kinds of ethnographic material collected, how it is portrayed by the respondent, and its interpretation by the ethnographer. In the next section I discuss how I was

positioned in Ramallah and how this shaped the research process and my relationships with American-Palestinian girls and their parents.

### Issues of positionality and the slipperiness of insider/outsider dynamics

When I first came to Ramallah during the spring/summer of 1993 the *intifada* was still lingering on, the town was under Israeli military occupation and suffering innumerable confrontations with Israeli soldiers, strikes and curfews, and the number of resident foreigners--particularly those unaffiliated by marriage or employment--were few. An exchange program between the West Bank's Birzeit University and Carleton University in Canada was sponsoring me, but this affiliation was extremely loose, almost informal in nature. Although Birzeit provided me with a shared flat in Ramallah, there were no other services, such as support for orientation and introductions or access to goods or services, included in the agreement. As such, I was forced to make my own way in Ramallah and the West Bank, which turned out to be an invaluable experience. As I mentioned in the opening of this chapter, I was fortunate to meet an American-Palestinian Friends School teacher who tutored me in the necessities and expectations of comportment for Palestinian and foreign women alike. I took these lessons seriously: dressing and moving about town modestly; never inviting men friends to my apartment or associating closely with men in public; keeping my sexual attitudes, values, and history to myself. This strategy worked brilliantly, and I avoided almost all harassment that I subsequently heard about or witnessed other western women being subject to, often new foreign teachers at the Friends School or volunteers sponsored by international development NGOs. In 1993, and again in 1995 when I returned I felt that it was important to adhere to dress and comportment codes strictly--perhaps more strictly than local girls and women--in order to counteract the predominant local perception of western women as promiscuous (Bowman 1989; Nader 1989) and to give the impression of utmost respectability (*cf.* Krieger 1986). With no Palestinian family to "protect" me I was dependent on the goodwill of neighbours and landlords and wished to give them every reason to believe in and trust my integrity and good reputation. Compounding this situation was the well-founded local sensitivity to colonialism and western imperialism, coupled with the perception of an affinity between Israelis and the west. Young Israeli (secular) women are believed to be sexually "loose" and are seen to dress in ways that are viewed as vulgar and too revealing. This situation leaves little room for a western foreign woman to gain local acceptance of ways of dressing and behaving that do not closely conform to local standards and expectations.

When I returned to Ramallah to live two years later I came as a married woman whose husband was a Friends School employee. The fact that Michael was a white western man teaching at a Quaker missionary school emphasised our Christian affiliation. Given local sensibilities, except

amongst the "intellectual" community, we believed that it was important to allow our neighbours, colleagues, and casual acquaintances to presume Christian belief on our part. I am devoting more attention to this issue here than I think Michael or I ever paid it when living in Ramallah. We rarely, if ever, spoke about the necessity of maintaining a "Christian" facade, and certainly never did anything when living in Ramallah to activate or support people's perception that we were Christian, such as attending church. I pay attention to this matter here because religious identity was an important issue given that all of the girls I spoke to were Muslim byaffiliation, and all but one by belief (she characterised herself as an agnostic or atheist, she wasn't sure which). Only a few asked me if I believed, and luckily they were girls to whom I could divulge challenging information about myself. I did not want to lie to the girls I interviewed, particularly since the success of my work depended on their honesty with me. Most of the other girls assumed that I was a Christian believer of some sort, and perhaps, given the stereotypes held of westerners, some assumed I was atheist, but if they did assume the latter this was never made clear to me. At least one girl who developed a very close relationship with me told me that she hoped that I would find God and perhaps even convert to Islam. I deal with this issue again in chapter four as it pertains to Palestinian identity.

Aside from issues of religious affiliation, the girls spoke of many other aspects of their identities having to do with being Palestinian and American, being English-speaking and not fluent in Arabic, being female and unmarried, and being both American middle- and upper-middle class urbanites and Palestinian villagers. For me, both as an urban, white, lower-middle class, Protestant, Anglo-Canadian woman and as a counsellor, these contradictions of identity that the girls spoke of intrigued and excited me. From a professional perspective I entered my research from my usual stance as a youth supporter and confidante. Much of my counselling experience in Canada was with teenagers, and involved advocacy work in the criminal justice, social services, and education systems. Sometimes it was difficult for me to get beyond a simplistic white middle class Canadian definition of the girls' situation as a human rights issue, although this perspective is also valid when it comes to analysis of their position (Yuval-Davis 1997). My feminist perspective also needed to be critically interrogated so that I might avoid some of the usual analytical traps white western feminists fall into when analysing "others'" situations (Lugones, Spelman 1983; Mohanty 1991b). In order to come to a more nuanced and complete understanding of the girls, their families, and the choices they were confronting, I needed to closely attend to the girls' own calculations and negotiations that supported what could easily and simply be constructed as human rights violations by their parents, particularly in cases where girls were deceived into moving to the West Bank or pressured into marriage at an early age. The girls I interviewed were neither helpless victims of circumstances--they by no means fell

into the "Not Without My Daughter" stereotype (Hoodfar 1993)[14]--nor were they fully free of social and familial constraint.

From a personal point of view, there was a weave of issues on which I both identified with the girls and found contrasts with my own experiences at their age. What I found, and find, very telling and interesting, however, is the fact that while I first expected to be able to identify quite deeply with the American-Palestinian girls based on a shared experience of an urban North American adolescence, I found that in actual fact this identification had very clear limits. Of course this initial expectation was founded on an immediate and mutual identification based on our shared North American cultural shorthand which covers over the complexity and diversity of the North American context, including its many sub-cultures and three nation-states. More particularly, this shorthand served to conceal, at least immediately, the significant and meaningful cultural differences between the girls and myself. For instance, coming from my origins in post-war North America, a context I shared with my interviewees, where dating is a normal part of adolescence and young adulthood and notions of marriage based on romantic love are deemed preferable, I would find parental intervention in my own sexual life unacceptably offensive. However, much to my initial surprise, not all of the girls I spoke to agreed with the practice of dating, nor were many of them adamantly against arranged marriages (provided they had access to veto power) or strong parental influence and involvement in the choice of their future husbands.

Some of the other items of disjuncture between the girls and myself quite likely had to do with the differences between us in terms of class and nationality. These girls' teenage social experience in the West Bank centred around school, visiting friends' and cousins' homes in the village, and the occasional foray into Ramallah and even more rarely, into Jerusalem. In the US it was limited to exposure to the suburban arena consisting of school, shopping malls and fast-food outlets, and sometimes friends' homes. Mixed-sex socialising was prohibited by their parents in the US and in the West Bank. While at first glance this seems to be a closely restricted social milieu, I knew from my previous, albeit limited, professional experience working with middle and upper-middle class American teenagers dealing with substance abuse that this was not unusual for adolescents of their class background in the US. In contrast, my own adolescent social life, and that of many "white" or second generation "assimilated" middle class Canadian

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[14] Betty Mahmoody, a white American woman, published her autobiographical book, Not Without My Daughter, that chronicles her escape from Iran with her young daughter. She moved to Iran with her Iranian husband shortly after the revolution and, finding her marriage and living conditions intolerable there, sought assistance from Iranian friends and neighbours to escape Iran without her husband's permission. The book and later film of the same name draws the family and living conditions of Middle Eastern, or more specifically Iranian, women in sharp stereotypes of the kind usually found in North America whenever Middle Easterners, Arabs, and Muslims are discussed or portrayed. The women in this book and film are characterised as abused, passive, and powerless (Hoodfar 1993).

teenagers, was centred around urban clubs, bars, cafes, concerts and outdoor festivals, and repertory movie houses, as well as visiting and "partying" at friends' houses. The smaller and safer nature of Canadian cities, coupled with their usually extensive public transit systems, means that even suburban Canadian teenagers are able to enjoy a broader and urban-based social life. The result of all of this is that in the West Bank I found it easier and more natural to identify with the teenage experiences of local Palestinian teenage girls, who along with enjoying more mobility than American-Palestinian girls in the US and the West Bank, also enjoyed more freedom to pursue dating and social relationships and activities that were similar to those I and my friends engaged in at their age.

However, comportment as a woman was the most difficult aspect of presentation of self I had to manage while living in Ramallah. This is not to say that there were no significant advantages associated with my position as a married woman. For instance, being married lent me a respectability that was practically unattainable for a single foreign woman to achieve because of the popular perception that western women are promiscuous (Bowman 1989; Nader 1989). This status was particularly valuable, I felt, as I was approaching schools requesting permission to speak with their girl students. In some cases, when I explained my connection to Friends School through my husband, teachers would tell me that they knew of Michael through some of the theatre work he had done with Friends students and through workshops sponsored by Education Network to train teachers in new classroom techniques. My husband's profile and my own status as his wife only lent me credibility in situations where I was an unknown quantity in my own right. I firmly believe that all of these factors opened schools' doors more easily than had I been a single woman unconnected to the high school education system in any way. Of course, presenting myself as the "teacher's wife" also perpetuated those aspects of marriage for women that I most dislike, resent, and normally resist. Nonetheless, as Abu-Lughod (1986) and Günseli Berik (1996) make clear, adhering to the gender status quo facilitated both women's ability to conduct fieldwork with a gender focus. This was also the case for me. While I might have gained access to girl students without my husband's connection to the Friends School, this was not necessarily guaranteed, especially given the previously cited experience of Sylvie Mansour (1997) and DCI (1996), both local researchers or research teams affiliated with local institutions.

When it came to interviewing unmarried girls my status as a married woman also carried particular implications. On the one hand, it made explicit the gap between us in terms of "official" adulthood. I think that in their eyes, for the most part, this made me a respectable and trustworthy person in whom to confide, once it was made clear to them or I had proved through my actions that I would not report their accounts to their teachers or school administrators. While my social status as a married woman was in some ways superior to and more powerful than theirs as unmarried girls (although this was also mediated by their "Palestinian" status as

opposed to my "foreign" status, something to which I will return), I also tried to undermine this position through a casual and egalitarian manner. Despite my greying hair, my appearance is fairly youthful and I do not think that the girls, unless they asked (as some of them did), would have known that I was as old as some of their mothers. In addition, my childless state de-emphasised my adult married woman status. While this might have posed a problem or barrier had I wanted to interview married Palestinian women, it had the effect of making me more like the girls and young women I was speaking with, closing the life-cycle gap that lay between us (*cf.* Oboler 1986, 45; Berik 1996, 61-2), and undermined any association they might have held, on generational grounds, between their mothers and myself.

Perhaps the most interesting identity negotiations during the course of my fieldwork, specifically in terms of my relationships with the girls I interviewed, were those having to do with "insiderness" or affinity. As I have already discussed, I brought specific expectations, as I believe the girls I interviewed also did, about our commonality that carried implications for the rapport we developed and which required careful navigation. North American culture is diverse and complex, and indeed there are differences between Canadian and American culture, but the girls, their parents, and myself often reified it to share a culture in common. There is now a significant body of literature that addresses the issue of insiderness in anthropological fieldwork (Abu-Lughod 1986; Altorki, el-Solh 1988; Wolf 1996), but my experience of "insiderness" demonstrates what a slippery theoretical notion this is for the ethnographer.

Many foreigners come to do research and to work in Palestine, motivated by their attraction to the revolutionary images of *intifada*-style activism and perhaps also by a genuine understanding of and desire to address the actual and historical injustices of the Palestinian situation. As a result of this romantic vision of the Palestinian cause, it is a local joke as well as a source of local annoyance that some foreigners become "more Palestinian than Palestinians". By this it is meant that they observe non-existent boycotts of Israeli goods and services and refuse to frequent the "west-side", are politically strident, uncompromising, and outspoken when it is not their "place" to be so and adopt political postures that most Palestinians would not take, and assume central or dominant positions in political and development activities. Palestinians and long-time foreign residents use the phrase "more Palestinian than Palestinians" contemptuously. Foreigners who fit this characterisation seem to deny through their actions and words the actual complexities, contradictions, and hardships faced by Palestinians in their everyday lives that are a direct or indirect result of the difficult and seemingly insoluble political situation, rendering the Palestinian struggle into a cartoon and hijacking it to valorise their own self-image.

Speaking of the same phenomena, Ted Swedenburg (1989, 265) suggests that western foreigners adopting such a stance "allowed us to disavow our real connections to the centers of power [that

oppress Palestinians]." For foreign women the impetus to "Palestinianise" istwo-fold. On the one hand most foreigners, men and women, living and working with Palestinians in Palestine wish to make clear their political support of the Palestinian cause and understanding of the issues. This desire springs not only from a real commitment to progressive Palestinian politics but also out of a desire to disassociate from their more ignorant and uncritical fellow citizens of western countries that have historically played important roles in creating and sustaining the mess that is Middle Eastern politics. Aside from American and European statespersons who routinely play "shuttle" politics between Israeli and Arab governments, the most visible manifestations in Palestine of western ignorance of the region and support of Israel are shorts-wearing western tourists who are ferried around East Jerusalem and Bethlehem by their more "knowing" and "experienced" Israeli tour guides who warn them of the dangers of venturing into the West Bank unguarded. For western women working or living in the West Bank and Gaza, the importance of differentiating oneself from "other" western women, that is those shorts- and halter tops-clad tourists and characters portrayed in TV shows like "The Bold and the Beautiful" and "Baywatch" (both of which are popular viewing in the West Bank), is particularly salient given local normative prescriptions of respectable behaviour and Palestinian associations between Israeli culture, western culture, and women's sexual promiscuity (*cf.* Bowman 1989).

The issues involving my "insiderness" in terms of my research relationships have very little to do with the political situation of the Palestinian people. Indeed, when I refer to my insiderness here I am speaking both about the North American cultural context I shared with my respondents and about my position as a western foreign woman who has (by choice) moved to the West Bank. It is on this basis that the girls and I shared a common "language" and perspective, and this commonality was also recognised by their parents by whom I was on more than one occasion held up as an example to their daughters of a westerner or North American who was "happy here". Indeed, it was this very choice to move to the West Bank that made me more like the girls' parents and less like the girls themselves. In fact, one set of parents actually went so far as to attempt to solicit my services to convince their daughter "to be happy here", a request I had to refuse. On another occasion I was characterised as "almost Palestinian" by the father of one of the girls I interviewed when he found out that I had first briefly visited in 1988, lived in Ramallah during the last months of the *intifada* in 1993, and had chosen to return in 1995. This definition of me as "almost Palestinian" was based both on my decision to visit and live in the West Bank during the *intifada*, a period of time during which he and his family left the West Bank and in which they did not visit, and on the premise of my choice to return. A history of *intifada* activism carries with it tremendous respect in the West Bank and Gaza, and the few girls I interviewed who were resident in the West Bank during the *intifada* were granted enhanced Palestinian credentials by the local community and amongst themselves. To just be present in Palestine during that time of their history denotes to Palestinians a willingness to suffer the

burdens of being Palestinian or to share in some way those hardships or communicate them to the outside, western world. Moreover, my choice to return to the West Bank, to make a willing decision to live in Ramallah for a period of a few years, represented to the girls' parents an attitude they hoped their daughters would adopt. Affection for and commitment to Palestine, manifested in a desire and decision to live there, was something I held in common with the girls' parents, and they were hoping that prolonged exposure to Palestine would inculcate their daughters with a similar sense of affiliation with their "homeland".

However, I felt impelled to downplay this aspect of my commonality with the girls' parents. Berik (1996, 65) claims that in contrast to her rural Turkish women respondents she

> had greater access to a world beyond the village, and I was free to pack up and leave for my privileged world at any time. But these were not indicators of privilege that were central or even relevant to the research relationship.

In contrast, it was this distinction, along with the absence of any familial or ethnic link to Palestine, that was one of the most critical in differentiating the girls' experience in the West Bank from my own. Girls frequently asked me when we first met, "Do you like it here?" It was clear that they wanted to commiserate as fellow North Americans about life in the West Bank. I always answered truthfully that I enjoyed living in the West Bank, but that I had made a choice to move there and I could leave whenever I chose. The girls acknowledged that had they had the same set of choices they, too, would have found it much easier to cope with living in Palestine. The girls, along with being "American", were also invested in identifying as Palestinians, and this coupled with my obvious status as a foreigner and a westerner caused me to usually avoid complaints about living in Ramallah unless I knew a girl quite well where our rapport was one where we could laugh and joke easily. It was important that the girls were convinced of my genuine affection for Palestine and Palestinians before I could reveal my own frustrations and annoyances suffered. For instance, one day while walking through the "*manara*" at the centre of downtown Ramallah I heard a car horn honking, possibly at me. I ignored it, as was my usual habit and which was the proper response in such a situation, knowing that if it were an acquaintance he or she would eventually call my name. The honking grew persistent until I looked at the perpetrator. Sure enough, the man in the passenger seat was a former professional colleague of my husband's and also of a young woman I was interviewing. He had asked the driver of the car to try to get my attention in order to deliver the message to me that Amal would not be able to meet me later that afternoon as planned. When I later saw Amal I told her about what happened and joked that I hadn't looked at Khalil at first because "I thought he was just some pervert." We both had a good chuckle, which was only possible because Amal had already shared her frustrations about sexual harassment on the street, because she knew I didn't

stereotype Arab men as sexual predators and macho jerks, and because Khalil is far from a "pervert".

The girls and I also shared other difficulties: problems with speaking Arabic, although their Arabic was almost always better than mine and they suffered more local pressure to be fluent; adapting to local expectations of comportment; missing North American goods, services, amenities, and culture, although the girls tended to miss McDonald's, shopping malls, and US high school activities while I missed seeing films, and having access to bookshops and cafes. In this way and others, generational, class, and national differences were apparent in what we missed about "home", or differently shaped our experience as North Americans, thus interrupting my commonality and shared perspective with the girls. For instance, while we shared the experience of a North American teenagerhood and a North American cultural heritage, this shared experience was undercut by my experience of being a teenager in Canada's 1970s as a member of the dominant ethnic group in my community, which was significantly different from their adolescence in the late 1980s and 1990s US as a "minority" population member with immigrant parents. Additionally, their status as Palestinians and Muslims granted them privileges and also worked to constrain them in ways different from my own experience in the West Bank. While I did not have the pressure of family members watching my every move, I also did not have the social "protection" of family or enjoy the privileges of family membership.

My initial assumptions that the girls I interviewed would be more like me than they actually were, along with the hazards posed by our sharing much cultural shorthand based on our common North American background (*cf.* Rosaldo 1988), made it necessary for me to continually interrogate my perceptions and beliefs about what was a "normal" North American adolescent experience. In addition, as I've already touched on, the usual assumptions that both Canadians and Americans hold about one another, that there are very little, if any, significant differences between us, had to be held under scrutiny. Both sets of assumptions forced me to problematise my own and the girls' sense of my commonality with them. At the same time, our shared status in the community as "foreign" and "western" women meant that we held in common similar experiences of social scrutiny and pressures to conform in dress and behaviour. In this sense we shared the position of being "outsiders" to local Palestinians, making us closer to each other. Of course, I could only partially share these positions with the girls given my non-Palestinian and married status.

Class differences also played a part in how I was positioned in relation to the girls. Again, there were several layers at play, based on the girls' and my own varying class positions in North America and in the West Bank. To begin with, the girls' urban middle and upper-middle class origins in the US differed from my own background and position in the urban lower-middle class

and my husband's origins in the poor rural small farming class and later location in the urban working class in Canada. This caused some disjuncture as I was often taken aback by my respondents' casual attitude towards material wealth and access to expensive consumer goods and social privileges in the US. Additionally, it is often the case that Palestinians assume that western foreigners living and working in the West Bank are from a privileged class background in their own countries. This was illustrated by a simple misunderstanding or misinterpretation of our class background held by one of my husband's colleagues and mother of one of my respondents. She invited us to her home for dinner to meet her husband and the rest of her children. In order to open conversation between her husband and Michael, she explained to him that Michael used to build houses in Canada, just as they had in the US. While Michael had worked as a construction site supervisor and carpenter in Canada, and had literally built houses, her husband had invested in a construction company in the US that built suburban subdivisions. They had both "built" houses in North America, but in very different ways and from very different positions in the class structure. Having said all of this, I believe that I was more aware of the North American class differences between the girls and myself than they were.

If my husband had worked as a high school teacher in Canada where it is a well-respected and well-paid profession, he would have found himself in the very comfortable middle class. However, high school teachers in the US, where most of the girls were from, are frequently poorly paid and given little professional regard. In Palestine, even private high school teachers are paid extremely poor wages and granted little professional esteem. This was somewhat attenuated for Michael and other Friends School teachers by the Friends' elite standing as a private school and as an institution that has schooled, and continues to educate, several generations of the Palestinian elite's children. However, the girls also suffered a class setback once in the West Bank, an issue to which I return in chapter three. Although middle and upper-middle class in the US, their parents' village origins relegated them to the peasantry in the West Bank. This facilitated a sense of commonality between the girls and myself, as they were free to interpret our lower class standing in Ramallah as an anomaly unrepresentative of our "real" class standing, similar to their own situation.

Finally, the girls, their parents, and Michael and I were all united in the situation of having to learn or re-learn what it was to be "Palestinian" in the West Bank. For Michael and me, not being Palestinian ourselves, we had much to learn, but were also carrying little previous baggage that might impede our perceptions. On the other hand, the girls' parents, who all grew up in the West Bank but who all also left in their young adulthood, were coming to terms with the West Bank of the 1990s in the new post-Oslo Accord era. They were often characterised by local Palestinians who had lived continuously in the West Bank as "traditional","conservative", and as not keeping up with the times and with the social changes that have occurred in their absence.

The girls themselves were often taken aback by and disapproving of local girls' comportment and behaviour when it did not conform to their parents' characterisation of what it was to be "Palestinian" or "Muslim", and were frequently unprepared for and overwhelmed by both the political situation and the material standard of living in the West Bank, and the dangers and constraints each imposed. This shared condition of having much to learn made outsiders of us all, and also united us in nostalgia for the ease of and opportunities available in North American life.

## "Returning" and the Palestinian context in the post-Oslo Accord era

No one knows exactly how many Palestinian-American returnees are resident in the Ramallah area. There has been no official census conducted in the West Bank and Gaza since Israel's, shortly after the 1967 occupation.[15] This fact, coupled with the political difficulties involved in gathering statistics on the returnee population, has made accurate figures an impossibility. According to the Oslo II text there are approximately ninety thousand Palestinians resident in the West Bank and Gaza who have no Israeli-issued identity cards (necessary for "legal" residency) (Tamari 1995, 12). As of December 1996, Israel claimed that there were a total of thirty thousand persons with expired visitor's permits staying in the West Bank and Gaza. The PNA Civil Affairs Committee (CAC) reported that between 1994-March 1996 ten thousand West Bank ("illegal") residents entered on Israeli-issued visitor's permits and stayed after expiry. Official Israeli sources claim that twenty-four hundred West Bank Palestinians were granted residency via Israeli family reunification procedures, and another three thousand spouses of Palestinians (Palestinian and non-Palestinian) in the West Bank and Gaza were also granted residency via family reunification procedures during the same period. According to the CAC, an additional three thousand Palestinians were granted residency through the Taba Agreement for registration for the Palestinian elections.[16] However, "[d]ue to the short application period and poor public information, only a minority of the estimated 20-30,000 eligible persons profited from this chance to legalize their status" ("Exposed Realities" 1996, 7; "The Silent Migration to 1967 Occupied Palestine" 1996, 7).[17]

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[15] However, in the fall of 1997 the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) was in the midst of conducting the first-ever census of the West Bank and Gaza since the Israeli occupation in 1967.

[16] Another report, which does not cite the source of the information, claims that fifty-five hundred West Bankers obtained residency through this channel (Gassner-Jaradat 1996, 31).

[17] Under the Taba Agreement, if one was able to document residence in the West Bank or Gaza for three years (if over forty years old) or four years (if under forty), one was entitled to an ID card through the filing of an application during the period of registration for the Palestinian elections of January 1996.

The 1997 Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) Population, Housing and Establishment Census found that 8.6% of West Bank residents (136,913) were born outside of Palestine. Additionally, in the Ramallah area alone, 6.2% of residents are classified as "migrants" by the PCBS (1996a, 67) according to their residence in another country in 1987, and 10.6% of residents are classified as "migrants" according to their birth in another country (it is not made clear if these are mutually exclusive or overlapping categories). It is impossible to derive how many Palestinian-Americans make up these numbers as none of these sources disaggregate migrants by place of emigration.[18]

Despite the dearth of accurate or reliable numbers, there are other signs that the population of "English-speaking"[19] returnees (predominantly American-Palestinians) has been growing significantly since the signing of the Oslo Accord in 1993. While Ramallah's Friends Schools have had English-speaking programs geared to the progeny of Palestinian migrants to the US since 1984, the el-Urdonieh School was opened by a local businessman, himself a returnee from the US, in 1991. The school solely caters to English-speaking students. However, el-Urdonieh was established more to accommodate students unable to meet the entrance standards of the Friends Schools than to meet a growing demand for this population.

According to Friends School administrator Peter Kapenga, American-Palestinian students have been educated at the Friends Girls and Boys Schools for at least twenty years. According to his account, it is possible to trace a pattern of American-Palestinian return to the West Bank through the Friends enrolment. American-Palestinian attendance at the school was not significant enough to warrant their own curriculum until the late 1980s. However, in 1987 the *intifada* began and English-speaking families fled to the US. The loss of American-Palestinian families during the *intifada* led to the Friends Girls School phasing out their English-speaking program. Just as English-speaking enrolment began to climb again the Gulf War began, initiating a new round of American-Palestinian families' return to the US. Since the signing of the Oslo Accords in September 1993 there has been a significant influx of American-Palestinian families returning and wanting their children educated at the Friends Schools (Interview, Friends Boys School, Ramallah, 2 October 1996), as well as other private schools geared to the education of American-Palestinian returnee or English-speaking students (A'alies 1995a; A'alies 1995b). During the summer/fall of 1995, a few months before the redeployment of Israeli troops from Ramallah and

[18] PCBS (1997) gives a population estimate for the Ramallah area at 205,448 If we use the PCBS (1996a) percentages with the PCBS census population estimates, at the most (adding the migrant by place of birth and migrant by place of residence figures) there would be approximately 34,500 migrants resident in the area.

[19] The term "English-speaking" is commonly used in the West Bank, and specifically at the Friends School, to refer to returnees from the US, Canada, and Australia, while "Arabic-speaking" refers to locally-born and raised students.

el-Bireh cities, three new schools (an-Najah, Jenan, and Scientific American School) were opened to specifically accommodate English-speaking students. In the fall 1996 Bridge Academy opened with the same mandate.[20]

Certainly there is much local media attention and interest in the American returnees and the American emigration phenomena (e.g. A'alies 1995a, 1995b; Ammar 1996; Education Network 1996; Ereikat, Kahef 1996; Iz-Eddin 1996; Ruggi 1997; Walker 1997; Baker 1998). Walking down Ramallah's main street it is commonplace to hear American-accented English spoken, to see American-style and name-brand clothing worn, and to hear rap music played from car stereo speakers and from inside shops, restaurants, and cafes. Whenever I mentioned the subject of my research to acquaintances, both local and foreign, they would offer up their own observations, thoughts, and theories on American-Palestinians and their specific culture, the conditions of their return and lives in the West Bank, and their prospects in Palestine.

Other signs, too, indicate an influx of Palestinian-Americans, including the opening of an American fast food chain restaurant, "Subway", in el-Bireh, as well as other, lesser well-known American fast food franchise outlets, such as "Henny Penny Chicken" and "Broasted Chicken", and in Ramallah "Checkers" and the Canadian doughnut chain, "Baker's Dozen". Rumour has it that a "McDonald's" is also on the way. These developments are seen as part of the continuum of modernization in Palestine, and are largely approved of and applauded, although some conservative quarters criticise these restaurants as deviations from Palestinian culture (Ruggi 1997). Most telling is one American-Palestinian franchise owner's comments:

> I haven't heard any complaints--it's all positive and encouraging because we have really set a business down on the ground and in so doing, have achieved recognition from the outside....This is a Palestinian business dealing directly with the main US company, without Israel as co-partner (Ruggi 1997).

These new small American fast-food franchises are part of the larger Palestinian battle to achieve a "normal" statehood and economy, out from under the Israeli thumb. As a result of their American citizenship and years of residence in the US, these American-Palestinians are attempting to forge links with and a claim to the US, its economy, and perhaps also its political sympathies, through business relations.

The mass return of Palestinian-Americans to the Ramallah area is occurring within a larger, general context of return, rapid economic and social change, and continuing political volatility. Shortly after the Oslo Accords were signed, land prices skyrocketed with some locales priced at

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[20] A seventh, Jerusalem School, an evangelical Christian school with an American curriculum in operation since 1986, was not opened specifically to accommodate English-speaking returnees.

US$1 million per dunam (¼ acre). The first six months of 1994 saw 113,000 dunams covered with new buildings, compared to seventy-eight thousand dunams for all of 1993 ("Ramallah Expansion" 1995). From January-August 1996 there were 669 new businesses registered, with the Ramallah Chamber of Commerce estimating a possible 30-40% more that were unregistered. The bulk of the new businesses have been in the service sector, predominately restaurants, cafes, bakeries, and grocery stores, followed by businesses in the construction sector and furniture stores (Jamal 1996). The proliferation of restaurants and bars in Ramallah is not solely attributable to the American-Palestinian influence, but more likely reflects the increased social freedom Palestinians are experiencing in the wake of Israeli redeployment and the influence of other Palestinians who have returned, and which is immediately obvious to anyone who had visited Ramallah before the Oslo Accords were signed. Then, streets were deserted at sundown, and only one local restaurant, "Angelo's" was open at night. Now, Ramallah's main street is packed in the evenings with men, women, and families who are strolling the street, going out for dinner, or stopping for ice cream or a pastry and coffee at the "European Bakery" and other cafes.

These other returned Palestinians are from Tunis, well-connected, and known for their social liberalism. As one source explains,

> These restaurants are indicative of the profound social and cultural changes taking place in Ramallah. It will be some time before this is felt in the rest of Palestine, if at all, but the influx in Ramallah of the large number of new inhabitants, working for the various PNA ministries and institutions which have set up shop there, has led to a new class of people with disposable incomes (Qurt 1996, 9).

The Palestinians who emigrated to the US, on the other hand, mostly originate from the villages, found their place in the small business immigrant class in the US, and are known for their social conservatism.

The other significant group of returned Palestinians are those fighters connected with the PLO and who were brought back as part of the Oslo Accord agreements to work in the numerous and secretive Palestinian police and security forces. There have been ongoing tensions between these forces and local *shabab* (young men, but in the Palestinian context this term also carries an activist connotation) since their arrival in 1995 in Palestinian cities where Israeli troops have redeployed. The Palestinian police and security forces are widely considered to be corrupt and brutal. Their heavy-handed treatment of Palestinians at Palestinian security checkpoints, the torture employed in Palestinian prisons, and the rumours of Palestinian police involvement in local car theft rings all reinforce this impression.

As for the larger political terrain, the Palestinian leadership is still in the midst of difficult political negotiations with their Israeli counterpart over the terms set out in the Oslo Accords and

subsequent agreements concluded through the "peace process". These negotiations are made ever more tricky because of opposition forces to the Accords in both the Israeli and the Palestinian camps. However, it is not just the opposition that can be held to blame for the badly faltering peace negotiations. The entire process of coming to the agreements themselves, as well as the imbalance of power between the negotiating sides and the overwhelming support Israel receives from the US (which is supposedly an "honest broker" and the major enforcer in the process) and the faulty, holey texts are all elements contributing to the failure now unfolding under the guise of "peace".[21] Currently, Israel still occupies all but 3% of the West Bank in what are known as Areas B and C. Area A, tiny isolated urban enclaves in the West Bank, make up the 3% of occupied territory from which Israel has redeployed, and which are under the total domain of the PNA (except for "security" considerations). Most villages are in Area B, and a few are in Area C. Israel retains full control of all aspects of life in Area C, whereas in Area B the PNA retains responsibility for social and municipal services and Israel retains control over issues having to do with "security". The PNA and the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) conduct regular joint security patrols in Area A, and the IDF maintains checkpoints on all roads leading out of Area A into Area B or C, effectively controlling flows in and out of Area A. The PNA also mans checkpoints at strategic points in Area A. Thus, Palestinians frequently claim that they are now subject to two occupations: by the Israelis and by the Palestinians. This is both a comment on the security measures to which they are still subject as well as the increasingly Kafkaesque bureaucratic procedures imposed on them by the newly established PNA ministries which act as a front line and distributor of decisions and procedures of the Israeli Civil Administration (the Israeli military bureaucracy that presides over the West Bank and the Gaza Strip). The Israeli Civil Administration maintains its presence in the West Bank and Gaza, only now outside of Area A borders and procedurally at one step removed so that Palestinians rarely have direct contact with it, in contrast to the years of the occupation previous to 1996. However, the PNA is accountable to the Israelis and the Oslo Accords-mandated "Joint Committees" (composed of Israeli and Palestinian officials) for practically every aspect of its governance.

Political events since the beginning of redeployments in the West Bank in 1995 (excluding Jericho, which was part of the "Gaza-Jericho first" agreement) have been volatile and have replaced initial Palestinian euphoria and hope in the peace negotiations with resentment and uncertainty. The assassination of Yihya Ayyash ("the Engineer") in the late fall of 1995 by the Mossad, the assassination of Yitzak Rabin also in late 1995, the subsequent retaliation bus bombings in Israel carried out by political Islamists in response to Ayyash's murder, the first

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[21] Edward Said is perhaps the most prominent and eloquent critical writer on the Oslo Accords and the peace negotiations. See his "Introduction" in The Politics of Dispossession: The Struggle for Palestinian Self-Determination, 1969-1994 (1994) for a first, scathing critique of the process and the internal PLO politics leading up to the agreement.

round of "internal" closures[22] of Palestinian territory by Israel, and the loss of the 1996 Israeli elections by Labour to Binyamin Netanyahu's Likud all set the stage for the subsequent failure of Oslo.[23]

That failure came with a resounding crash with the September clashes in 1996, resulting in over eighty Palestinian and fifteen Israeli deaths and well over a thousand Palestinian civilians wounded. While the initial protest began in Jerusalem over the Israeli opening of the "Hasmonean Tunnel" under the *Haram al-Sharif* mosque compound in the Old City,[24] demonstrations spread to Ramallah and Bethlehem the next day, and then to the rest of the West Bank and Gaza the day after. Veterans of the *intifada* claim that the clashes were more severe and traumatic than anything experienced during the uprising and indeed, anything since the 1967 war. Israeli tanks encircled Palestinian cities for the first time since the 1967 war, and local hospitals were unable to cope with the casualties flooding their doors. Some of the deaths and medical complications arose because of inadequate equipment and supplies to deal with the crisis. Photo-journalists were able to capture footage of Israeli troops firing from helicopter gunships at the heads and torsos of teenage female Palestinian civilian combatants who were using the traditional rocks as their weapons. The trauma of this conflict, as well as the new style of internal closure that effectively imprisons West Bankers into small enclaves, has brought the realities of the new era of "peace" home to Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza.

When I returned to a school in el-Bireh to continue interviews after the September clashes I was told by teachers that a Christian American-Palestinian family who had students at the school had returned to the US in the conflict's aftermath. There is no way to determine how many other American-Palestinian families made the same decision. Other students told me that their parents had remonstrated with them, "Why should you be any different [than your Palestinian-

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[22] "Internal" closures differ radically from the steady state of closure since 1993 that closes off the West Bank and the Gaza Strip from each other and from Jerusalem, requiring an Israeli-issued permit for entry into Jerusalem or Israel. The internal closures entail the encircling of Palestinian cities by IDF checkpoints, effectively trapping Palestinians inside or outside of their communities, and shutting down access to educational institutions and health facilities, as well as blocking movement of goods and labour. My husband, who was teaching at the Friends School during the first round of internal closures, had a boy attending his classes for a week who was not a student at the school. He was from a neighbouring village and was visiting his friend in Ramallah, a student of the school, when the closures were imposed, effectively preventing his return home. Many students of the school who lived in surrounding villages were unable to attend their classes for two weeks during this first closure.

[23] These conditions set the stage for the failure of the process, but were not the cause of the failure itself. Cause can be directly linked to the contents of the Accords themselves, the structure of the negotiating process, the vastly unequal power differentials between the negotiating parties, and the fudging on a basic or shared agreement of desired final outcomes and their ultimate terms (i.e. Palestinian statehood, borders, the return of refugees, water and other resources, and Jerusalem).

[24] The protests over this tunnel had two rationales: first, it was argued by the PNA that the opening of the tunnel changed the status quo of Jerusalem in violation of the Oslo Accords; second, it was argued that the tunnel endangered, and thus violated, this most prominent Islamic holy site, confirmed by engineers and

born/raised counterparts]?" as a way of justifying their presence in the West Bank in the face of such conflict. Many American-Palestinian youths, male and female, went to the IDF checkpoints where the sites of the battles were located and actively participated in the clashes.

Demonstrations and small-scale clashes over Hebron, the "Har Homa" Israeli settlement on *Jabal Abu Ghneim* and other Israeli settlements in the West Bank, and retaliatory bus bombings and bombings in other public spaces, both in Jerusalem and Israel, as well as Israeli-imposed general and internal closures continue with no real end in sight. The political process limps along, with Palestinians continually prodded by the Americans to make ever more compromises on their stated goal of national self-determination, sovereignty, and political and economic autonomy.

### *The Ramallah area and its place in Palestine*

Ramallah is located in the Nablus mountains approximately eighteen kilometres north of Jerusalem in the central West Bank. Ramallah acts as a transportation and marketing gateway to Jerusalem for all areas north, and is also home to many West Bank PNA ministries and institutions. Many international and local NGOs have their offices in Ramallah, prompted mainly by the permanent state of closure of the rest of the West Bank from Jerusalem. Along with Jerusalem and Gaza, Ramallah is home to many foreigners attached to NGOs or who are visiting researchers, academics, development consultants, journalists, and so on. While Ramallah was traditionally a Christian village, and still has a significant Christian minority, Muslims compose the majority of the population now. El-Bireh, which adjoins Ramallah, has always been a Muslim town, and is well-known for its significant American-Palestinian population. More urbane Ramallans sometimes refer to el-Bireh somewhat derogatorily as "a village", emphasising its more conservative character. The two towns now merge into each other to form one urban mass.

Ramallah is the central city amongst over eighty surrounding villages, and provides health, education, social, financial, and commercial services to the area (CEP 1995, 1, 37; PCBS 1996a, 81-3). With the remaining West Bank closed off from Jerusalem, it is often remarked that Ramallah is acting as Palestine's capital, and with the proliferation of arts and social events, as well as restaurants and bars, the city is certainly becoming a social and cultural capital. People, Palestinian and foreign, regularly come from as far away as Bethlehem (on the southern side of Jerusalem) to partake of Ramallah's new nightlife. Indeed, this burgeoning nightlife has not gone without comment from some of the area's more conservative members. Sheik Hamed

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archaeologists who have documented the structural damage that has ensued from the excavation of the

Bitawi of the Muslim Theologian's Society issued a *fatwa* declaring that the cultural festivals held annually in Ramallah run counter to Islamic law ("Debate over merit of festivals" 1996). The PNA security forces' vice squad have proven to be an intrusive force in Ramallah, invading Palestinians' privacy and private space to arrest unmarried couples, participants at mixed parties and late-night gatherings in restaurants and bars, and those drinking alcohol ("Self-appointed vice squad" 1996). Urban mythology abounds with stories about licentious activities at one or another of Ramallah's bars and restaurants, and about over-sexed returnee women from Tunis causing the death of men forced to sexually over-perform.

Nonetheless, Ramallah is no Cairo or Beirut. There is one main street housing shops and restaurants. Other shops, restaurants and bars are located on nearby side streets. There is one newly-opened movie house featuring Arab and foreign "B" movies, and the Popular Arts Center shows quality Arab and foreign films. There are two summer arts festivals, and the French Cultural Centre has opened up an office that provides French lessons and also sponsors French cultural events. The new Khalil Sakakini Centre sponsors small arts and cultural events, and visiting musicians to Jerusalem also sometimes play to Ramallah audiences at the el-Saraj Theatre. The Ashtar Theatre also has its studio just outside Ramallah. While Ramallah certainly has cultural and social offerings that surpass any other city in Palestine, it is still a small city, often reminiscent of its village origins, and also has definite conservative underpinnings. Transportation systems to Jerusalem are only reliable before the last call to prayer, and those to surrounding villages and towns before sundown. Buying alcohol necessitates carrying your purchase in a tell-tale brown paper bag. Ramadan is communally and publicly observed by secular Muslims and by Christians who refrain from eating, drinking, and smoking in public during the month. Women dress modestly, with few short skirts in sight. Ramallah is still a face-to-face community, with all of the attendant lack of privacy and gossip as a social control mechanism.[25] If now every resident of Ramallah does not know each other directly, it is more than likely that each has an acquaintance or social connection in common. Socially and geographically the city and area is small enough to constantly encounter acquaintances at every step.

Palestine itself, as composed of the West Bank, including occupied East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip, is a small country. The World Bank put the maximum population estimate at 2,200,000 at the end of 1992, using Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics (ICBS) figures, and including all those Palestinians possessing Israeli-granted residency rights but living abroad. In the West Bank

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tunnel.

[25] For instance, one afternoon after work my husband and his female boss, at her invitation, went for a drink at one of Ramallah's most popular bar-restaurants. Inside there were numerous former students of his from

alone the population was estimated to be 1,200,000. The numbers living abroad were estimated to be 350,000, with 227,000 of those from the West Bank (World Bank 1993, 5, 7-8). More recently, the PCBS (1997) estimated the resident Palestinian population to be 2,895,683, with 1,873,476 living in the West Bank.[26]

The Ramallah district or governate population is estimated to be 205,448, including 45,989 in Ramallah and el-Bireh, 13,169 in area refugee camps, and the remaining 146,290 (or over 70% of the population) in the surrounding villages (PCBS 1997). Another study claims that the "main distinguishing characteristic of the demographic situation in this district is the historical pattern of migration and mobility [to the US]", and that this factor, coupled with the influx of refugees from other parts of historical Palestine during and after the 1948 war, means that an estimated "one-half of the population of the district is not original to it...[which] may have a number of implications regarding the nature of society and communal living in Ramallah" (CEP 1995, 1).

***Residency rights of American-Palestinians***

Residency rights of those returning from the US are tenuous. Although some Palestinian-Americans were able to maintain their residency status while living in the US, many lost it and have been forced to return to Palestine as US citizens on visitors permits and have remained illegally after their permits' expiry. Obtaining legal residency is nearly impossible for the majority of Palestinian-American returnees who previously lost their residency rights. Only those attached to the PNA in some way, "mainly PLO army personnel, political functionaries, and professionals and their families" are permitted residence outside the usual channel of "family reunification". Moreover, a painful contradiction exists where those PLO officials who are permitted return often have no remaining family ties in the West Bank (or never had in the first place), while the returning Palestinian-Americans forced to maintain "illegal" residence almost always have large family networks still existing in the West Bank. This fact, and the competition for scarce economic, housing, and educational resources has exacerbated tensions between Palestinians from the "inside" and Palestinians from the "outside" ("The Silent Migration to 1967 Occupied Palestine" 1996, 8).

Family reunification procedures were reportedly at a complete halt as of December 1996, and in any event those eligible must have a parent, child, or spouse (married before November 1995)

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his year of teaching at the Friends School. My husband's boss, who lived in Jerusalem, felt distinctly uncomfortable with the inquisitive stares that cast her, she felt, as the "other woman".

with legal residency. While children of Palestinians with residency rights may be registered on their parent's identity card, once over the age of sixteen they must apply for family reunification. Their only other recourse is to maintain Israeli-issued tourist visas in their American passports. Although Oslo II, signed in Washington on 28 September 1995, granted some provision for residency rights for those who were living in the West Bank and Gaza illegally, through voter registration procedures in the then upcoming Palestinian elections in January 1996, most Palestinians in this category failed to take advantage of this window of opportunity. Most of the fault lay with a poor information campaign advertising the initiative and its procedures. In any event, there was likely inevitable mistrust surrounding this campaign as all residency, Palestinian passport, and family reunification applications must meet with the prior approval of an Israeli military counterpart committee and/or Israeli ministry, which also applies a strict and limited quota (two thousand per year) on grants for Palestinian family reunification, including those applications requesting changes in residency from the West Bank or Gaza to Jerusalem for reasons of marriage (Tamari 1995; "Exposed Realities" 1996; Gassner-Jaradat 1996; "The Silent Migration to 1967 Occupied Palestine" 1996).

Thus, those unable or unwilling to renew their Israeli tourist visas every three months by leaving the country and then returning live an existence that is mostly limited to those areas where they are unlikely to be subjected to an identification check by Israeli military personnel. This means that trips to Jerusalem are impossible without circumventing the Israeli checkpoints on every road leading to the city from the rest of the West Bank; impromptu Israeli military checkpoints, which are frequently erected throughout the West Bank for "security" reasons, must be strictly avoided, as well as any attempt to leave their villages during times of internal closures imposed by the Israeli military. Trips to Jordan or other international destinations are out of thequestion as Israeli customs personnel will apprehend them. Some American-Palestinians returnees have observed these strictures for a period of years.

### *Migration, class, and social change and differentiation*

The central West Bank is the wealthiest Palestinian region. The Ramallah area economy, like most of the northern West Bank, is based on agriculture, a little industry, and services, including commerce and trade. Industry is minor and mostly concentrated in pharmaceutical production and food processing. The local economy is also highly dependent on Israeli wage labour and family remittances from the US. There is a high rate of local reinvestment of foreign remittances

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[26] The Palestinian population figures include the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, and "annexed Jerusalem". They do not account for Israeli settlement population figures, but do include "foreign" residents of Palestinian locales (PCBS 1997).

in real estate and construction--the evidence of which can be seen in the villages and outskirts of Ramallah-el-Bireh which are dotted with new white stone villas with red-tiled roofs (CEP 1995, 2, 26-7).[27]

Although the central West Bank is the most prosperous area of Palestine, physical standards of living,[28] particularly in the villages, are not comparable to those of the middle class urban/suburban US. For instance, a PCBS (1996a) demographic survey of the Ramallah-el-Bireh area, which included the two cities, found that over 80% of households live in crowded conditions.[29] According to a Center for Engineering and Planning (CEP) survey of villages conducted in 1995, almost all Ramallah-area villages suffer from water shortages during the summer, and 39% do not have water supply and distribution networks, and those that do require repair and upgrading. The CEP found that none of the villages have sewerage collection and disposal systems, and only approximately one-third have solid waste collection and disposal systems, with the widespread use of open and uncontrolled pits composing the most prevalent system. The PCBS reports that less than a tenth of Ramallah-el-Bireh area households were connected to public sewerage systems. However, access to electricity is widespread, according to the PCBS, with almost all households connected to the public grid, which albeit suffer numerous power black- and brown-outs. Most access roads are paved, but many internal roads are not, and most roads, paved or not, are in bad condition and in need of replacement. School structures vary from one-third of the buildings being deemed in suitable condition and the remainder in need of extensive repairs. Health facilities are prevalent, however many of these health care services are in unsuitable buildings, or do not offer needed services or are under-equipped. Most of the health care services are offered only during certain times of the week and not on an on-going basis (CEP 1995, 40-4; PCBS 1996a, 24, 40).

Possession of durable goods is a useful indicator to consider, especially as adolescents from the US would be particularly sensitive to and aware of the presence or absence of such goods in their households because of their use as social status and identity indicators in the middle-class US.[30] According to the PCBS, less than one-third of all households in the Ramallah area own private

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[27] Escribano and el-Joubeh (1981, 154) describe the architectural style of many of these new villas as "a mixture of American suburbia and a Middle Eastern type of columns."

[28] A discussion of physical living standards is not insignificant when considering American-Palestinians' sense of identity, given Barber's (1997) finding that more than any other factor accounting for post-*intifada* Palestinian adolescents' sense of well-being was the importance of physical surroundings. In his 1994-5 survey of seven thousand Palestinian families across the West Bank and Gaza having at least one adolescent child he found that the physical quality of their neighbourhoods had a greater impact on adolescents' sense of self than any other factor (including *intifada* experience and parental relationships), and if negative, could lead to a lower adherence to family values, and lower valuing of educational attainment, religion, and peer relationships, and social withdrawal and anti-social behaviour.

[29] Defined as more than one person per room.

cars, and less than one-quarter have telephones or VCRs. However, colour TVs, cookstoves, refrigerators, and washing machines are in relative abundance.[31] While a small minority of households are equipped with central heat or air conditioning, over one-half of households have a flush toilet and over three-quarters have a bathroom or shower (PCBS 1996a, 38).[32] As can be seen here, some goods such as cars, telephones, VCRs, flush toilets, central heating, and air conditioning are in short supply, especially as compared to possession of such goods in the urban/suburban US. Kitchen appliances are fairly prevalent, which might be more relevant to the comfort of mother-housewives, but are also directly pertinent to adolescent girls' standard of living because they are mostly required to assist their mothers with housework. In most cases it is safe to assume that many but not necessarily all of these durable goods would be present in the homes of American-Palestinian returnees.

Since Palestinian-American homes in the West Bank almost always fall in the upper percentile ranges of ownership of durable consumer goods, appliances, and amenities, it is instructive here to examine the class composition of West Bank Ramallah area villages in order to understand the general position of Palestinian-American families in their home villages. Some basic statistics from Deir Dibwan, well-known for its migrant population, should illustrate changes that took place in villages between the 1950s-80s: in the 1950s almost 80% of male heads of households were involved in agriculture and husbandry, with the remainder in labour and trade, the civil service, or had migrated (approximately 6%); in 1967 the proportion of those involved in agriculture had declined to approximately 38%, over 39% had migrated, and the remainder were working in labour and trade and the civil service; in 1981 fewer than 13% were in agriculture, over 21% were in labour and trade, less than 6% were civil servants, and over 61% of village heads of households had migrated (Escribano, el-Joubeh 1981, 151-2). As early as 1973, status cleavages exacerbated and reinforced by the two phenomena of Israeli wage labour and migration to the US were found to be major factors in village sociological organisation, with land ownership, consumer goods, and housing, as well as the sending of sons to the west for their education, acting as primary markers of status (Migdal 1980, 62*ff.*; Escribano, el-Joubeh 1981, 154). During Jordanian rule remittances from these sons living abroad allowed village landowners to buy more land and build new houses. This acquisition of land and house construction has taken on a special intensity of meaning and symbolises connection to the land and village, especially in the wake of the 1948 and 1967 occupations, mass out-migration, and continuous Israeli confiscation of Palestinian lands.

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[30] See Twine (1996) for a discussion of the important role that material consumption plays in the acquisition of "white" middle class suburban American cultural identity.
[31] Found in 73.8%, 69.8%, 94%, and 74.8% of households, respectively.
[32] The percentage of households thus equipped are: 5%, 1.2%, 60%, and 76.3%, respectively.

Construction activity and increased amounts of land under cultivation meant that landowners were hiring poorer villagers and increasing bonds of dependency in the village (Migdal 1980, 66). However, after the Israeli occupation these poor villagers secured wage labour in Israel at pay rates that local landowners were unable to compete with, thus rupturing these patronage bonds and enabling these wage labourers, who were now experiencing unprecedented wealth, to make new claims to status. This situation was exacerbated by the fact that many of these land-owning villagers' sons were unable to return to the village to be the inheritors of their fathers' positions having lost their residency rights because of their absence during the Israeli census shortly after the occupation. Nonetheless, segregated marriage patterns continued to exist where men of non-land-owning families had to find wives from other non-land-owning families (Migdal 1980, 67, 68; Taraki 1997, 8). Interestingly, as Israeli wage labourers began to press claims to higher status because of their newly acquired wealth, the landowners began to redefine the basis for village leadership from wealth to those "who know more", asserting that their sons, who were educated abroad, are those "who know more" (Migdal 1980, 69). It is these sons who are now returning to their West Bank villages with their wives and children.

The physical landscape of villages also began to change as a result of migration and the Israeli occupation. At the centre of most villages stand a concentration of stone houses, some which are hundreds of years old. Surrounding these are newer houses built during Jordanian rule, and in the outskirts stand the new villas, usually built by families with members living and working abroad. These villas are often designed to house entire families (parents, their children and their families). While in the past entire families used to live together and share one kitchen, these new villas afford each nuclear unit their own apartment, including kitchens. With the advent of Israeli wage labour, nuclearisation of the family began to escalate, freeing both sons and their wives from the immediate and everyday constraints of their fathers and mothers-in-law (Cohen 1965; Moors 1996a). The villa arrangement allows for residential nuclearisation while still keeping the family unit together.

While nuclearisation of the family and the decline of elders' authority has certainly been a trend that has accompanied migration and access to Israeli wage labour, other forces have worked to reinforce the strength of the *hamula* (village clan) and the extended family. For instance, in the absence of a legitimate government, criminal justice system, and social and public service and support systems Palestinians have had to rely on family and other informal networks for the provision of goods and services normally granted by state authorities (Shaban, al-Botmeh 1995; Taraki 1997).

Individual wealth at a scale not normally associated with the village is certainly observable in American-Palestinians' homes given not only their large new houses, but also all of the consumer

goods contained within them, particularly electronic appliances and elaborate furniture. In Deir Dibwan, approximately 80% of village families depended on foreign remittances in 1981 (Escribano, el-Joubeh 1981, 153-4).[33] While a large number of Deir Dibwani men have wives and children in the village, remittances were not sent exclusively to these dependants but also to siblings and parents, and "[t]he more financially successful migrants, presumably influenced by the values of the societies in which they work, superimpose some of the material manifestations of those values on the traditional values of the village" (Escribano, el-Joubeh 1981, 153). Traditional *mukhtars* (traditional village leaders or elders) continued to hold their positions of authority in villages, albeit accompanied by a degree of cynicism on the part of villagers regarding traditional institutions of power. This remained true until the *intifada* when local party political leaders and veterans of Israeli prisons took on leadership positions and were granted political and social status (Darweish 1989, Peteet 1994; Taraki 1997, 17). Lisa Taraki (1997, 8) notes that although Palestine is a "peasant" society, because of the trends already noted regarding land, cultivation, and wage labour, agricultural land ownership has "ceased to be the main determinant of social stratification in the village", with wage labour and remittances playing greater roles in processes of social differentiation. Finally, Taraki (1997, 17) also reminds us that the *mukhtars* were supported and used by the Israeli occupation authorities to quell resistance, thus widely discrediting their legitimacy and status. Tensions between families with migrants abroad and those without may also have been intensified by the fact that migrants and their families almost never invested their monies in development or productive schemes that may have assisted their villages as a whole; rather they used their capital to the benefit of their family members only (Escribano, el-Joubeh 1981, 158, 159).

Despite the wealth of many in the central West Bank, this area is suffering economically as are all other Palestinian regions according to recent quarterly economic reports issued by the United Nations Special Coordinator in the Occupied Territories (UNSCO). Especially hard hit are those dependent on wage labour. Wage labour incomes in the West Bank are falling more rapidly than those in the Gaza Strip, leading to declines in real household incomes and consumption levels. The Israeli-imposed closures are the major culprit causing the pressure on wages (both inside Israel and the West Bank), increased unemployment, and general and steady economic decline in both the West Bank and Gaza since the conclusion of the Oslo Accords in 1993 (UNSCO 1997). This situation negatively impacts returnees and locals alike, rendering it difficult for local families to make ends meet, and making it impossible for returnees to safely invest in business or

[33] Families themselves often take on a new shape when migration is as play. In Deir Dibwan in 1981 it was found that a "high percentage" of fatherless families were resident, with women as heads of households as a result of husbands' brothers also often away making a living abroad (Escribano, el-Joubeh 1981, 157). In the Ramallah area approximately 11.5% of all households are female-headed, with the largest proportion of those (40.8%) composed of one spouse with children (PCBS 1996a, 47). Unfortunately, there is no way of determining from these statistics how many of these women have male spouses abroad.

find adequate employment in the West Bank, thus forcing the fathers/husbands of returnee families to maintain their employment or business activities in the US.

### *Matters of everyday life for adolescent Palestinian girls: education, marriage, and the conditions of being female*

Against this backdrop of economic and political crisis and rapid social change, Palestinian and American-Palestinian girls have their own set of immediate concerns. Matters that are of particular importance are freedom of movement, education, marriage, and the possibility of a career (as revealed through a study done by Defence of Children International [DCI] and my own research). DCI (1996, 44) found that "[w]hen writing about their right to move freely, girls from cities and villages focused more on going out with friends and classmates rather than on the right to travel so as to know the land [in contrast to girls from camps]." The FAFO report found that

> married and unmarried women are almost equally unable to go any place, but unmarried women are less able to go to the various destinations alone....younger and unmarried women have a greater sense of restriction of movement than older and married women....this relationship cuts across socio-economic, regional and educational levels (Heiberg, Øvensen 1993, 304, 305).

DCI's (1996, 14) study found differences between city, camp, and village girls in terms of their mobility:

> Girls from camps and villages participated less in organised activities outside the home. The two main reasons are lack of opportunity and restrictions of parents.

Freedom of movement is linked to concerns about family honour, which demands tight control over female members' comportment and mobility. The imperative is on girls to dress and behave modestly, quietly, and to move in a self-contained and restrained manner. The adoption of self-sacrificing and self-denying attitudes is deemed proper and feminine. Sexuality is a taboo topic and girls are not educated by their mothers or anyone else about their bodies, feelings, or relationships with boys and men. Talking about sexual matters is disgraceful, and mothers fill their daughters' heads with horror stories about honour killings as a way to protect them through deterrence. If girls behave disgracefully, by talking or walking with boys, or exchanging letters or photos with them, they may be beaten, restricted to their homes and prevented from attending school, and/or married off quickly (Manasra 1993, 8-12). Girls resident in villages and camps find themselves much more restricted by these considerations on average than girls living in cities (DCI 1996).

Some women expand the extent of their mobility by literally putting on piety, in the form of partial or full Islamic dress, as a reassurance to their families and a shield against community gossip:

> Within the constraints of their social environment, by taking on the ideology and attributes of piety, women can gain leverage and manoeuvrability. Their ability to move in public, for instance, is much less threatening to their families because they are "protected" by their dress (Heiberg, Øvensen 1993, 265).

Interestingly, education only seems to have a negative impact on women's mobility, or none at all, with age and life-cycle position being the most important determinants:[34]

> There is a correlation between education and freedom of movement, but except for the most educated of women, it is negative.
>
> Further analysis indicates that it is age, not education, that is vital in regard to freedom of movement. In relation to age there appears to be two thresholds. The lower one divides unmarried women from married women. The upper threshold separates married women, still of child-bearing age, from those who are post-menopausal (Heiberg, Øvensen 1993, 149).

Nonetheless, most adolescent Palestinian girls wish to pursue post-secondary education. A recent survey of 283 Ramallah area adolescent girls (forty-eight were returnees) revealed that 65% wanted to continue their education after completion of high school, 8.2% wanted to work, and 9.7% wanted to marry. Most of the respondents qualified their answers with the proviso that their future depended on whether or not their family wanted them to get married (Mansour 1997).

The literacy rate in the Ramallah area is 83.1% for those fifteen and over, with females aged 15-24 having a +95% rate of literacy. Of children aged 6-18, 93.3% attend school. However, only 65.1% of females aged 15-17 attend school compared to 71.4% of their male counterpart, and only 4.9% of females and 7.3% of males aged 18 and over attend school. In Ramallah area villages, only 7.2% of those enrolled in school attend a private school (compared to city enrolment rates of 29.9%). The majority attend public government schools (78.1%), and only 4.2% attend university or college (compared to city rates of 11.9%) (PCBS 1996a, 24, 44).

Post-primary school is still a privilege for many Palestinian girls, with post-secondary education only a dream for most. Although the *intifada* and reported lack of academic ability were found by the FAFO report to be factors for girls' early withdrawal from school (Heiberg, Øvensen 1993, 138-9), financial and social barriers also play a role, with girls needing to achieve high grades in order to justify their attendance:

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[34] Education may relate to mobility in a wider sense, of course. In 1981 in Deir Dibwan, of the 129 villagers who had graduated from university or another institute of higher learning, only fifteen remained in the village (Escribano, el-Joubeh 1981, 156).

> Girls who do not do well in school sometimes run the risk of being threatened to be taken out of school by their parents. High grades are apparently a legitimation of the financial and social obstacles that parents often have to take in order to send their daughters to school (DCI 1996, 22).

The reasons for limiting girls' education can be found in logics of economic security and investment, where boys are regarded as parents' future source of support in their old age, and in the impetus to maintain family honour and protect the marriageability of their daughters (Heiberg, Øvensen 1993, 131; Manasra 1993, 10).

The vast majority of adolescent American-Palestinian girls attend private schools offering curricula specially designed to meet the needs of "English-speakers". In this they are unique as "[g]irls attending private schools in general have parents with relatively high levels of education and more stable economic circumstances....[but] [g]irls who live in villages and refugee camps generally have parents whose education ended at primary school" (DCI 1996, 13). These schools are almost all located in the vicinity of Ramallah-el-Bireh, requiring sometimes lengthy service taxi trips or drives from their parents in order to reach them from their villages. Specifically established to meet the needs of children of returnees who do not speak or write Arabic and therefore cannot cope with the local curriculum, these schools offer an American curriculum using American textbooks, for the most part, and gear their students towards performance on the American SAT test required for entrance into American universities. At the same time, they offer Arabic lessons, and classes on Islam and Middle Eastern history (A'alies 1995a, 8-9). While on paper the schools' curricula sound impressive, according to one survey, teachers working at these schools consider the academic offerings inferior and totally inadequate as preparation for entry into universities in the US. Moreover, the Arabic lessons meet the students' needs insufficiently and are not designed or taught by teachers who are trained in the teaching of Arabic as a foreign or second language (which it is, by and large, to the majority of the English-speaking students) (Odeh 1996-7; Interview with Alia el-Yassir, East Jerusalem, 8 October 1997).

However, in order to gain entrance into a Palestinian university or universities in Jordan or the rest of the Arab world, the *tawjihi* (standardised high school matriculation examinations written in Arabic) must be passed. *Tawjihi* scores are also important in obtaining professional jobs in Palestine. The only Palestinian university accepting students without the*tawjihi* on the basis of their SAT scores is Birzeit, which offers an English language and literature degree as well as a business degree in English. The rest of the offerings are taught in Arabic, although the texts used for the courses may be in English. It is not difficult to understand from this that American-Palestinians who are not fluent in written and spoken Arabic have a limited range of academic

and professional options should they remain in Palestine. For the girls this takes on particular importance as they are rarely permitted to return to the US unaccompanied by a close male family member or a spouse.

The relationship between marriageability and education level of girls is an interesting one. The FAFO report concludes, "In terms of marriage a certain amount [of education] increases attractiveness, too much is counterproductive", especially since in Palestinian society it is "not acceptable for a woman to be both married and a student" (Heiberg, Øvensen 1993, 153). While men's education levels and marriage rates were relatively stable, it was found that 80% of women who had 10-12 years of education were or had been married, and only 58% of women with thirteen years or more of education had been or were married (Heiberg, Øvensen 1993, 153).

In the Ramallah area less than one-fifth of women aged 15-19 are married and over half of women aged 20-24 are married. The median age of marriage for women aged 20-24 is eighteen, and the median marriage age for men is twenty-three for the cohort aged 25-29.[35] Of married women aged 15-24, almost half married a cousin or another relative from the same *hamula* (a further 16.2% married relatives from a different *hamula*), while over one-third married non-relatives (PCBS 1996a, 49-51).

Migration has affected traditional endogamous practices, if we are to use Deir Dibwan as an example. Deir Dibwani men tended to marry outside the village in 1981, but it remained rare for Deir Dibwani women to do so. The *mahr* (marriage dower) of Deir Dibwani women is determined not only by her family's status but also by whether she has US citizenship or not. US citizenship commands a higher *mahr*.[36] However, a high *mahr* may be out of reach of most Deir Dibwani men, and those more prosperous families, often holding US citizenship themselves, have no need of a prospective wife's citizenship. Additionally, many Deir Dibwani women are reluctant to marry Deir Dibwani men, not relishing the prospect of raising children on their own in the village while their husband earns the family living abroad. Nonetheless, used to a high material standard of living, along with the endogamous strictures still more in force for women than for men, Deir Dibwani women have few other choices if they wish to marry and retain their current material comfort (Escribano, el-Joubeh 1981, 156-8). My own interviews revealed that

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[35] The survey did not measure median age at marriage for those age-sex cohorts where less than half were married. Median age can only be measured when more than half of the sample is married (PCBS 1996a, 50).

[36] This is true not only in Deir Dibwan, but also throughout the whole of Palestine (Manasra 1993, 15). Also see Cainkar (1991, 304) who describes the marginality of Palestinian-American women and their difficulties in finding marriage partners amongst both Palestinian-American and Palestinian-born men. Their relatively high marriage dower plays a role in the rejection of Palestinian-American women by Palestinian-born men.

American-Palestinian girls almost all were adamant about marrying fellow American-Palestinian men, and were unwilling to run the risk of being married for the sake of their American passports. They assumed that they would accompany their husbands to the US, just as their mothers had, and that there would exist a better understanding between two spouses of the same "hyphenated" national and cultural background than if they chose to marry local Palestinian men.

Village girls are exposed to marriage offers from an early age. The DCI (1996) study differentiates between city girls attending private schools, who rarely have to contend with the issue of marriage during their high school years, and village and camp girls in government and UNRWA schools who must begin negotiating this issue from their early and mid-teens. The legal age for marriage in the West Bank is fifteen for women and sixteen for men. Thus, the term "early marriage" as used by academics and activists in the West Bank takes on an ambiguous cast unless specifically defined. For those from a western context, depending on country and region of origin and class background, early marriage age could be defined as anything under age 20-25. Nonetheless, there is growing concern about early marriage, and its correlation with divorce, with one report claiming that 46.5% of divorces occur in the 15-20 age cohort ("Early marriage causes increase in divorce rate" 1995; Roffey, al-Kurd 1997, 9). In addition, Palestinian feminists are angry and concerned about the Mufti of Jerusalem's endorsement of early marriage and polygamy as means to deal with adultery "and related sins" (Zughayar 1995).

While there has been much debate about the increasing phenomenon of early marriage, there is little research to indicate its occurrence in the West Bank (i.e. under the legal age limit). The FAFO report reveals that while there is little support for marriage of daughters at below the age of fifteen, 39% of mothers supported marriage of their daughters at ages 15-18, a further 79% supported marriage at ages 19-25, and 27% supported marriage of their daughters at over the age of twenty-five. Further, the more supportive a mother is of older marriage, the older she was herself at marriage (Heiberg, Øvensen 1993, 293).

Choice of spouse is also at issue, with women appearing slightly more conservative on the issue than men. While 11% of men thought choice of spouse should be their daughter's choice alone, only 7% of women agreed. Few men or women believed that the choice should be the father's alone (4% and 5%, respectively), and 5% of men and 11% of women believed that parents should have a decisive influence. The vast majority of men and women, 80% and 76% respectively, believed that selection of spouses should be mainly the daughter's choice (Heiberg, Øvensen 1993, 293).[37] Accompanying these attitudes are changes in marriage arrangements in the West

[37] However, the FAFO report is unclear, and possibly contradictory, on this particular point. In another section of the report it is shown that approximately 80% of women and little more than 50% of men believe that it is permissible for women to marry someone they choose themselves (Heiberg, Øvensen 1993, 251).

Bank. While traditionally daughters had little say over whom they married, with the arrangements made between parents of prospective spouses, now daughters are commonly consulted, with their decisions respected. Although daughters are rarely able to choose their own husbands, they now have veto power when men come to their families to ask for them. If, however, daughters make too much use of their veto power, or approach the age of twenty-five without being engaged, parents may take matters into their own hands. Couples are now allowed to meet each other before a decision to engage is made, albeit closely supervised, and engaged couples are allowed to get to know one another before the wedding (Manasra 1993, 12-13).

While girls take marriage and children for granted, few Palestinian girls in the 1990s desire a future for themselves that does not include work outside of the home:

> Most of the girls expressed the wish to work and have a profession. They want to put their education to use, become independent, participate in society and generally be with people. Only a few, when considering the future, did not mention having a career but concentrated instead exclusively on having their own family. Regardless of whether they aspire to a career or not, all of the girls saw themselves married and having children at some point in the future (DCI 1996, 27-8).

The choice and pursuit of a career, however, may be limited. Considerations of family honour can play an important role in what type of work young women train for and ultimately take up, and primary responsibility for childcare is still widely seen as belonging to women. Non-respectable careers are those that bring women into public contact with men (Heiberg, Øvensen 1993, 210), with women being "notably over-represented in mid-professional jobs in public services (nursing, teaching etc.)" (Heiberg, Øvensen 1993, 211). Class, education, marital and reproductive status all have a bearing on whether women work outside the home or not, with highly educated women and women from wealthy families working outside of the home the most, as well as young unmarried women, widows, divorcees, and women without children (Heiberg, Øvensen 1993, 209).

Thus, adolescent American-Palestinian girls in the West Bank find themselves in a social context much more restrictive to young women in general than that of the US, as do their parents in their options for raising their daughters in ways acceptable to their village communities. Mobility and honour, education, marriage, and work are all areas of concern for daughters and their parents. Similarities also exist between the Palestinian-American and Palestinian milieus. Marriage arrangements are conducted in much the same way whether in Palestine or the US, for instance, but education for girls is much less universally accepted by West Bank village communities than it is by Palestinian-American communities in the US. While subject to restrictions on their movements and dress by their parents in the US, American-Palestinian girls find that their comportment is a matter of general public concern in the West Bank in a way never experienced

in the US, especially since their age at relocation to Palestine often coincides with the early stages of their parents seeking marriage offers for them.

Yet, the concerns of adolescent Palestinian and American-Palestinian girls in the West Bank are set within a larger framework of issues in which Palestinians are waging struggles with the PNA over issues of human rights, civil society,[38] and women's rights. Palestinian women's organizations are deeply concerned about domestic violence, early marriage, women's legal status, and women's access to economic, political, and social goods, and are anxious to establish a solid foundation for a broad definition and protection of women's rights in the fledgling Palestinian state (Coleman 1995; Shalala 1995; Batsh 1996; "Women Want Action" 1996; Abusway 1998; Ruggi 1998).[39] The PNA's "Basic Law", which as yet has not been ratified, recognizes all the various international conventions and declarations of universal human rights in Article 8, and in Article 10 states, "Women and men shall have equal fundamental rights and freedoms without any discrimination" ("The Palestinian Authority Basic Law" 1996, 17). Yet in subsequent articles contradictions begin to emerge. Article 17 states,

> No person shall be subject to arbitrary or unlawful interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, or to unlawful attacks on his honor or reputation. The law shall provide protection against such interference or attacks ("The Palestine Authority Basic Law" 1996, 18).

Further, Article 22 guarantees,

> Motherhood, childhood, the family, the young and the youth have the right to protection and to the availability of proper opportunities for the development of their talents. Such protection is a duty on society to be discharged by the Palestinian authorities within the limits stipulated by law ("The Palestine Authority Basic Law" 1996, 18).

In the English translation of this law is the use of "his" in Article 17 purposeful and faithful to the original Arabic wording? If so, what are the bounds of protection of privacy, family, home, and honour? Are domestic violence, including honour killings, and early marriage worthy instances of such protection? What are the "proper opportunities for the development of...talents" of mothers, children, the family, and youth? Who defines them and what are the properties of what is "proper"? A recent United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) document on the condition of Palestinian women highlights the contradiction between women's constitutional rights and their civil rights in the legislative codes of most Arab countries:

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[38] I will not here go into these debates and issues, but LAW's monthly People's Rights, which began publication in 1997 is a good, if sometimes graphic, source of information on both PNA and Israeli human rights violations, as well as discussions about PNA governance. The Palestinian NGO Network's (PNGO) newsletter regularly comments on civil society, NGO issues, and relations with the PNA. Finally, Palestine Report also publishes frequent articles with these issues at their heart.

> [W]hereas women's political equality is recognized under their constitutional rights, women are not equal under the laws affecting their personal status. The traditional separation of the private and public spheres has contributed to this dual status (UNDP 1994, 7-8).

This separation of the public and private is maintained by the Palestinian Basic Law draft's Article 17 where privacy (implicitly male) is protected and home and family are upheld as private matters. These questions are not insignificant, particularly as they relate to adolescent girls who are especially vulnerable given their economic and social dependence on, and often subordinate position in, their families.

As it currently stands, the legal situation in the West Bank puts women who are dealing with domestic violence, sexual abuse, and issues of marriage and personal status at considerable disadvantage. The system now emphasises "traditional" and Islamist perspectives on women, their role, and their rights. In the absence of a legitimate state and criminal justice system during the years of the Israeli occupation and before the arrival of the PNA, Palestinians pursued justice in matters of criminal offences and family issues, among others, through alternative means, as opposed to the use of Israeli, Jordanian, Mandatory, or Ottoman codes and systems.[40] This was implemented by elders or reconciliation committees before the *intifada* and by "popular courts" and mediation during the uprising (Wing 1993, 102-4, 122-7). Despite the effectiveness of popular and mediation committees during the *intifada*, the use of these venues to solve issues of family violence served to reinforce the patriarchal structure that is often the cause of such abuse (Interview, East Jerusalem, 14 July 1993), emphasising "traditional family and community norms...rather than individual justice" (Wing 1993, 150). Important here is the observation that "the common law authorizing this mediation and enforcement process does not view the individual as an autonomous agent; suspects or individuals involved in disputes are dealt with through the agency of their immediate kin, and in some cases, a wider circle of relatives....the elder males of the family represent the individuals involved and are authorized to resolve the conflict, which is viewed in this system as involving families rather than individuals standing on their own" (Taraki 1997, 17-18). Thus, women do not act as central agents in legal claims, and acceptable resolutions are those that maintain the patriarchal status quo where elder males are privileged over the young and women. Judges practising "tribal" or "traditional" law have been coordinating their efforts with the PNA, enhancing the legitimacy of each (Bukhari 1995). *Urf* (customary law) is based on "traditional customs and norms that stress conciliation, mediation, and family and group honor within a community" (Wing 1993, 103), and as such, has particular

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[39] See Welchman (1990) for a discussion of family and *shari'a* law in the West Bank and how this shapes the terrain of women's rights.

[40] Laws in the West Bank are based on a confusing and labyrinthine combination of these codes.

ramifications for women. Issues of honour also play into women's willingness to use the formal court system, thus making mediation processes more attractive: "Traditionally, Palestinian women avoided court proceedings because the community considered it shameful for women to appear in court.... .less formal dispute mechanisms are particularly suited to women, given the cultural taboos against appearing in courts" (Wing 1993, 110 n.89).

While personal status laws and the use of customary, tribal, or traditional legal frameworks clearly affect women's decision-making concerning their family life, Safia Mohsen (1990), writing on women and criminal law in Egypt, reminds us that these are not the only forms of legislation that critically affect women's status in the Middle East. Mohsen indicates that the area of criminal law has been neglected in literature on Middle Eastern women, a significant void given that assault, homicide, and rape and sexual assault all fall into the area of the criminal code. These issues were of real concern to my respondents who were well-versed in stories of honour killings and the possibility of rape if they did not take all steps to preserve their "reputations" through observance of conservative dress and comportment codes. Mohsen (1990, 22-3, 33) found that in Egypt women were frequently given "special consideration", that is, disadvantaged, under the law, often because arrest and prosecution could negatively affect her and her family's reputation. Mohsen (1990, 23) also found that in cases involving disputants of different socio-economic classes, men of higher class might receive better treatment than women of lower position.

Criminal law in the West Bank (excluding East Jerusalem, which has been formally annexed by Israel, though unrecognised by international law or Palestinians) continues to be based on Jordanian criminal codes in force at the time of occupation, and which have come under a great deal of criticism from Palestinian feminists and women's organisations (Muhaisen 1997; Abusway 1998; Antonelli 1998). For instance, according to the 1960 Jordanian law in place in 1967, "any physical damage [to women caused by their legal male guardian, e.g. fathers or husbands] which lasts less than 10 days is not punishable by law" (Muhaisen 1997, 5). "In a case of incest, a woman cannot sue her father because the actual laws pretend that if the woman is a minor, a male member of her family must denounce the event", claims Maha Abu-Dayya, director of the Women's Center for Legal Aid and Counselling. She concludes, "It is really hard to imagine an incestuous father who would go to the police station to sue himself" (Antonelli 1998, 16). "Honour killings" seem to be justified by Article 341, where it is stated that murder is a legitimate act when "The act of killing another or harming another was committed as an act in defense of his life, or his honour, or somebody else's life or honour" (Ruggi 1998, 13).

Family violence, sexual abuse, and female suicide are pressing issues in women and girls' lives in the West Bank and Gaza. It is commonplace to read or hear of honour killings in Palestine,

and Palestine Report regularly makes mention of them in its columns. Local agencies such as the Center for Women's Legal Aid and Counselling provide direct services for women suffering family violence, dealing with 443 women in 1997, and are taking an activist role in the community to confront its incidence at the service provision, community awareness, and national legislative levels (Interview with Maha Abu-Dayya, Shu'fat, 14 February 1996; al-Astal 1996; Muhaisen 1997; Abusway 1998; Antonelli 1998). No centralised or official records-keeping institution exists to document the incidence of such violence (Ruggi 1998), and the existing legislative framework and official Palestinian police responses are woefully inadequate. For instance, counsellors at the Working Women's Committee in Nablus told me of one incident of rape of a young woman where the family complained to the police. The family of the perpetrator was ordered to pay compensation to the family, and the girl was forced to marry her rapist (Interview, Nablus, 26 February 1996; also see Abusway 1998 for an account of an incest victim being imprisoned by the Palestinian police).

In addition to the legal and legislative climate, policy decisions frequently also disadvantage Palestinian women. When Palestinian passports were first being issued by the PNA it was necessary for women to gain their husband's, father's, or other male guardian's signature in order to obtain one. It is unclear whether this issue has been satisfactorily resolved, although Palestinian women's groups protested this policy (Batsh 1996; Abusway 1998; Seitz 1998a). In another well-known instance, the general director of the Ground Transportation Department in the PNA's Ministry of Transportation issued a statement requiring women driving students to be accompanied at her lessons by a family member "in order to uphold the morality and traditional values of society". In the storm of protest launched by women's groups and some driving schools, the department quickly repealed the directive, making it a suggestion only ("Female driving students won't need escorts" 1996; Sawalha 1996).

"Tribal" laws, *shari'a*-based personal status laws, and policies such as the ones discussed above are all justified on the basis of their supposed roots in "tradition" and religion (notions which are frequently conflated). "Tradition" and religion have strong normative value in Palestine, and this is understandable given the years of political, social, economic, and cultural siege that the Israeli military occupation has imposed on Palestinians and the current ideology generally made popular in the Middle East by Islamist groups. These beliefs follow the line that a "return" to Islam will provide solutions to all political, economic, and social ills in Arab societies that are popularly believed to have been imported from the west. This has a direct bearing on the status of women as carriers of group identity, a theme I explore in chapter four:

> Knowledge about the West has a strong bearing on the position of women, for it is through this knowledge that the grip on women is justified in many countries of the

> Middle East....Common sense and public oratory lead people to believe that they are spared the social problems of the West because of their religion (Nader 1989, 327).

Attitudes such as the one expressed by a participant at Ramallah's Bisan Center conference on "Domestic Violence Against Women" on 20-21 October 1997, that "if Palestinians wanted liberation 'Western style' then the result would be more violence against women in Palestinian society", reveal an underlying assumption that social ills are the outcome of western influences (cited in Elkateb 1997).

These issues directly shape or legislate the terms of mobility, freedom of life choices, and protection from abuse of girls and women in the West Bank. However, with the exception of sexual assault and honour killing, they were rarely explicitly mentioned by the girls with whom I spoke. Nonetheless, in the chapters that follow it is easy to detect how "tradition", policies and legislation based on patriarchal notions of women and the family, and family and sexual violence shaped identity options and deployments of the unmarried American-Palestinian returnee girls that shared with me their life narratives.

The larger political and economic context, and social conditions and change at the village level, were often disappointing for the girls' returning parents and bewildering for the girls themselves. Disappointment with the material standard of living, local ways of doing things, standards of efficiency and professionalism, and anger at local corruption and the predominance of cliques at every social and professional level are frequent and oft-cited sources of frustration (*cf.* Bahour 1996; Moughrabi 1997; Mar'i 1998). At the village level the girls and their parents sometimes faced local resentment given their obvious greater wealth, and there was a contradiction and an irony in the fact that parents brought their Palestinian-American daughters from US suburbs to the volatile and often violent West Bank in order to "protect" them. The remainder of the thesis examines how unmarried American-Palestinian girls navigated these conditions and negotiated the contradictions inherent in their situation as returnees.

### About the rest of the thesis

When I first began interviewing American-Palestinian returnee girls it quickly became clear to me that it was impossible to understand their situation and understanding of themselves without also having an appreciation of their families' migration histories and backgrounds in the West Bank, as well as an account of how the girls saw their lives in the US. This material, coupled with recent theoretical literature dealing with transnationalism, migration, exile, and diaspora form the basis of chapter two which traces the history of Palestinian migration from the Ramallah area to the US, and the nature of diaspora and diasporic existence there. In the task of collecting

this material I was helped enormously not only by the girls' interview material, but also by a collection of oral history accounts conducted by Dina Abou-el-Haj's Friends Boys School grade eleven English-speaking Palestinian History class in 1995. The students were instructed to interview their oldest living family members in the West Bank and to submit a written account of their discussions. In addition, I draw on the work of other scholars studying Palestinian and Arab migration from the Middle East and to the US and the conditions of life for Arabs, Muslims, and Palestinians in North America. At the conclusion of this chapter I question the celebratory tone of much of the identity and transnationalism literature, specifically the notion of "hybrid" identities. Missing from much of this writing is an appreciation of the human pain and cost involved in such transnational lives, as well as a more nuanced understanding of exactly what constitutes these "hybrid" or "hyphenated" identities.

In chapter three, I continue to examine the nature of Palestinian-American lives in the US, but more specifically from the vantage point of the girls I interviewed. Drawing on the girls' narratives as well as literature that discusses ethnic, national, racial, and religious identities, I postulate that the identities the girls deployed were based on a series of "identity options" that are contingent and inserted in various class, ethnic/racial, religious, and gender relations and ideologies. In the US the girls and their families were forced to negotiate their Arab and Muslim identities in an American context that is often hostile to and ignorant of the Middle East, its culture, and people. Thus, in the US young Arab-Americans might choose other options, such as feeling affinity within the black/African-American rap music culture or in mainstream or subcultural streams of middle class "white" identities. Once in the West Bank, American-Palestinian girls were expected to be "Palestinian" while they were almost everywhere castigated for being "American". Socially recognised as being of rural origin, hence "peasants", in the West Bank, they were faced with a huge disjuncture between how they saw themselves and how local Palestinians viewed them. This was particularly the case when it came to sexual comportment and availability, where American-Palestinian girls largely refrained from premarital sexual relationships in the West Bank, in contrast to many of the local girls they observed, but were nonetheless perceived as being sexually "loose" because of their "Americanness". Palestinian-American girls were understandably frustrated by this and came to see themselves as more "Palestinian" than local girls because of their strict adherence to prohibitions on dating (which according to their parents in the US is a defining feature of being a Palestinian and/or Muslim girl). The girls' identities in the US and in the West Bank are explored and analysed, exposing their contradictions and their variability according to context and investment, and this chapter makes the point that identity is fluid and multiple.

Chapter four examines how discourses and practices based on notions of family "honour" shaped the experiences and identities of Palestinian-American girls in the US and in the West Bank.

After an overview of the literature on honour and shame and its discursive power at the family, community, and national levels, I discuss how Palestinian-American girls were gendered according to such considerations through "practices of restrictions", particularly in order to preserve their marriageability to Muslim Palestinian men. Further, I suggest that their parents' own identities as Palestinians were dependent on the girls' successful maintenance of family honour and that this impelled them to move their daughters to the West Bank once they reached the "dangerous age" of sexual maturity. Almost all of the girls told me they moved to the West Bank to "learn more about our religion", an idiom for protection of family honour or "reputation". The girls were particularly angry about the double standard to which they were subject, both in the US and in the West Bank, where their brothers were permitted to date and to return to the US for university education if they so desired, while they were closely scrutinised and usually required to remain in the West Bank until marriage. This chapter examines representations of self as sets of practices.

In chapter five, I discuss how American-Palestinian returnee girls invested in and negotiated their various identities as Muslims, Palestinians, adult women, and Americans. Borrowing from post-structuralist anthropological, feminist, and psychoanalytic literature I examine how "hybrid" identities are in fact multiple identity deployments or sets of practices based on a variety of investments and fantasies that not infrequently contradict one another. I discuss how girls managed issues of "covering",[41] education, and marriage in order to illustrate these ideas. The notion of identities as practices of power gives shape to their choices or options in these three areas, completing the picture of their lives at this marriageable but unmarried stage of their life-cycle in the West Bank. It is at this stage that I interviewed all of the girls I spoke to, and at which point they experienced pressures and expectations that were peculiar to this most sensitive time in their lives. Identities are practised according to opportunities and investments, which are sometimes contradictory. In the process of their negotiations, American-Palestinian returnee girls found new ways of being "Palestinian", "Muslim", and "American".

In chapter six, I conclude by summarising the findings of the previous chapters and attempt to come to some sort of over-arching understanding of their meaning for the lives and identities of American-Palestinian returnee girls in the West Bank. This research contributes to a broader understanding of analytic issues having to do with identity, particularly as it has to do with migration and gender. Family gender relations and pressures on identity can determine migratory decisions, as in the Palestinian-American case. The conclusion restates how these girls carried multiple and contradictory identity investments in the US and in the West Bank, and how practices of identity are also practices of power. Thus, a simple notion of transnational identities

[41] The term "covering" or to "cover" was used by the girls to refer to the act of wearing a headscarf.

that does not accommodate contradiction and multiplicity, as opposed to simple duality, fails to capture the nuances and complexities involved in the various investments and practices that characterize such "hybridity".

## Chapter Two

## In and Across America and Palestine: Palestinian Migrant Lives

> All my children are married and have their own kids. All my children are in different countries. Some are in America, Jordan, and some used to live in Kuwait. My son Imbarak's (bless his soul) wife and children live with me. I raised his children like my own. Some of my grandchildren I haven't met. Hopefully, I'll meet them soon. My life was hard, but I can't complain, because I was better off than many people I know (Shehada 1995, 14)--*a West Bank grandmother.*

> By ethnoscape, I mean the landscape of persons who constitute the shifting world in which we live: tourists, immigrants, refugees, exiles, guestworkers and other moving groups and persons constitute an essential feature of the world and appear to affect the politics of (and between) nations to a hitherto unprecedented degree. This is not to say that there are no relatively stable communities and networks, of kinship, of friendship, of work and leisure, as well as of birth, residence and other filiative forms. But it is to say that the warp of these stabilities is everywhere shot through with the woof of human motion, as more persons and groups deal with the realities of having to move or the fantasies of wanting to move (Appadurai 1990, 7).

Palestinian lives in the late 20th century are indelibly marked by displacement, disjuncture, migration, and return. Reading oral history projects written by grade eleven American-Palestinian students recently "returned" to Palestine and who were attending a West Bank Quaker school established by American missionaries at the turn of this century, I am struck by the repetition of these themes embedded in their elders' stories.[1] Their grandparents, great-grandparents, great aunts and uncles speak about: avoiding enlistment in the Ottoman army; abandoning their villages and escape from death at the hands of Israeli soldiers in 1948; stubborn resolve to hold fast to their homes in 1967; husbands, fathers, and brothers far away in unimaginable lands for life-times, interrupted only by brief visits resulting in the fathering of more children, and ending with either return to their homeland or death among "strangers"; men living two lives, with sets of wives and children in Palestine and in America; the yearning for the possibility of family all in one place at one time, in Palestine, and the continuity of generations in the land of their ancestors.

Anthropologists and other social scientists have only recently begun to recognize that the migrant state is pervasive rather than exceptional, and are now theorising what this means both for collectivities and nation-states. While sociological theories of migration date from at least the

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[1] Here I am referring to a collection of oral history projects written for the grade eleven Palestinian History class taught by Dina Abou-El-Haj at the Friends Boys School in Ramallah in 1995.

1920s,[2] the psychological and cultural fabric of migrant experience is only now being widely addressed in ethnographic literature that attempts to describe and understand transnationalism as a way of life, and its impact on our world.

Many of these writers affirm that migration and transnationalism are not new phenomena; they all point to factors of scale of modern movement and displacement due to warfare and totalitarian regimes (Said 1984), modern technologies of communication and transportation (Appadurai 1990; Ahmed, Donnan 1994), the new importance of international cultural flows (Hannerz 1989; Ahmed, Donnan 1994), and increasing political-economic globalisation and transnationalism of capital (Basch, Schiller, Blanc 1994) as features that distinguish this era of transnationalism from ones previous. Yet as Linda Basch, Nina Glick Schiller, and Cristina Szanton Blanc (1994, 27, 28) point out, much of the new literature remains suggestive, instead of offering concrete models of transnationalism, its effects and how it is constituted:

> The term "transnational" is used to signal the fluidity with which ideas, objects, capital, and people now move across borders and boundaries. Scholars of transnational culture speak in the vocabulary of postmodernism and make reference to hybridity, hyperspace, displacement, disjuncture, decentering, and diaspora....Productive of a new imagery, much of this discourse on transnationalism has remained evocative rather than analytical.

In contrast to anthropological and cultural studies literature on transnationalism, and with the rejection of the "push-pull" model of migration (which theorises migration only in terms of "push" factors such as war or unemployment in the home country and "pull" factors such as open immigration policies in the host country),[3] sociologists who are now studying migration are describing and explaining the everyday, individual, and community facts of the experience of migration. Structural models such as chain migration and enclave economies in host societies are now being used with more explanatory power. Researchers are documenting and analyzing how social networks of migrants encourage and sustain migration over space and time:

> Once begun, migration flows often become self-sustaining, reflecting the establishment of networks of information, assistance and obligations which develop between migrants in the host society and friends and relatives in the sending area. These networks link populations in origin and receiving countries and ensure that movements are not necessarily limited in time, unidirectional or permanent (Boyd 1989, 641).

The household figures prominently in these new theories of migration, and propensity to migrate is linked to access to financial resources and life cycle stage, as well as immigration policies in host countries (such as the US) that encourage family migration (Boyd 1989, 642-3, 647-650).

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[2] See Richmond (1988, 1993) for reviews of literature on involuntary migration theory, Boyd (1989) for a review on migration and the family, and Gonzalez (1992) and Yamanaka (1996) for reviews of literature on migration and its use in specific anthropological cases.

Return migration and transfer of remittances to remaining family in the sending country also figure prominently in network conceptualisations of migration, including their role in maintaining the class status quo at home (Gmelch 1980, 148-50; Boyd 1989, 650-1; Basch, Schiller, Blanc 1994, 269-78). Ethnic enclaves and ethnic enclave economies in host countries play prominent roles in the adjustment and maintenance of new migrants, and are confluent with family networks and the family as a unit that primarily sustains and transmits "norms about the meaning of migration" (Boyd 1989, 642-3, 651-4; also see Bonacich 1973).

In effect, what many theorists have attempted to describe is the nature and construction of transnational communities as entities unbroken by national boundaries that have an integrity and continuity across space. It is in this area that anthropologists are making the most interesting and useful theoretical and analytical contributions by "develop[ing] an alternative cartography of social space" (Rouse 1991, 12). As Arjun Appadurai (1991, 191) explains, "groups are no longer tightly territorialized, spatially bounded, historically unselfconscious, or culturally homogeneous".

Commenting on Caribbean transnationalism and migration to the US, Basch, Schiller, and Blanc (1994, 27) and Constance Sutton (1994) assert that political and economic marginality, amplified by racism, is a barrier to assimilation and encourages migrants to maintain and develop social relations in their home country. Alternatively, sometimes a perceived cultural affinity with the host society, coupled with minority status in the home society, is enough to encourage assimilation in the new country and a weakening of ties to the old (Mandel 1989a; al-Rasheed 1994). This may explain the almost complete lack of Christian Palestinian return from the US to Palestine. Indeed, economic marginality in the host country may play a minimal role, and in fact is perhaps a hindrance to migrants' abilities to construct transnational lives. Certainly a relatively high minimum income is necessary to live transnationally in any meaningful way.[4]

Nonetheless, wider access to and the development of more efficient transportation and communication technologies augment migrants' ability to construct these transnational existences in ways that were not possible over twenty to thirty years ago. These factors, along with post-colonial sensibilities ("being here because you were there") mean that migrants no

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[3] See, for example, Gmelch (1980). Although he is one of the few anthropologists to review literature on return migration he subscribes to a "push-pull" explanatory model.

[4] This point contradicts Basch, Schiller and Blanc's (1994) assertion that economic marginality encourages the development and maintenance of transnationalism and transnational identities. However, I have observed that it is only Palestinian-Americans of the middle classes (as opposed to the spectrum of the lower class) that can regularly afford airline tickets home, the construction of houses in their home villages, and the sending of remittances to their families in the West Bank. These, I believe, are some of the main material components necessary to the construction of transnational identity.

longer become "hyphenated Americans", but instead build a "dual-place identity" facilitated by continuous bidirectional exchange (Sutton 1992, 231):

> [There is a] continuous and intense bidirectional flow of peoples and communications between the Caribbean region and New York City. These bidirectional exchanges and interactions serve as a transmission belt that reworks and further creolizes Caribbean culture and identities, both in New York and the Caribbean. Thus Caribbean identities entail dual-place commitments and concerns, which generates a Caribbean transnational sociocultural system.
>
> Dual-place identities are a function of the strong ties Caribbeans maintain to their homelands, facilitated by the geographic closeness of the region and encouraged by an "ideology of return". They are further sustained by the continuing inflow of Caribbean peoples to New York City and by a great deal of back-and-forth visiting (Sutton 1992, 235).

Palestinian migration to the US provides its own examples of "dual-place identities" and existences:

> I went to see America for the first time in 1989. I came to see your sister's graduation. I came to Chicago [to] visit my sons. I was there for a year. I stayed long enough to get a green card and a social security card. I spent most of the time a[t] your father's house but sometimes at your Uncle Jalal's or Uncle Labib's. I couldn't believe when I saw the Arab side of Chicago. I thought I was in Ramallah. I saw so many Arab shops. Your dad took me everywhere in Chicago. I went to the Sears Tower and saw the whole city from there. I liked where you lived in Plano. That area is very quiet. I especially liked your neighbor Mrs. Mary. I couldn't understand her in English but I could tell she was very kind. The whole time I was there I missed Sinjil. I could have easily stayed with my sons in Chicago but I knew my real home was in Sinjil. I was born in Sinjil and intend to die in Sinjil (Masud 1995).

The speaker is a grandmother who has lived in the same Palestinian village all her life but whose sons live in the US. Her story reveals the existence of an Arab ethnic enclave in Chicago, but more importantly it speaks to the construction of a self in more than one place, despite the determination to "die in Sinjil". Ironically, while in the Arab side of Chicago, she "thought [she] was in Ramallah", the largest town near her village. She still retains affection for their neighbour Mrs. Mary and the neighbourhood in which her son lived. Finally, in the year that she stayed in the US with her sons, one whose child now lives in Palestine, she obtained a green card and a social security card. These are documents of entitlement to US state social services and resources that retain their validity past the time she was physically resident there, and which can be used again once back in the US.

There is an almost "loose cannon" aspect to transmigrants' identities due to the fact that they are no longer necessarily defined by one nation-state at a time:

> Official migration theory, i.e., migration theory informed by and in the service of the nation-state, is disposed to think of the sociology of migration in terms of "sending" and "receiving" communities, each of which is in its own national space. But what the ethnography of transnational migration suggests is that such communities are constituted

> transnationally and thus challenge the defining power of the nation-states which they transcend (Kearney 1991, 59).

Indeed, this development holds serious implications for international politics as well as political developments in both the host and the home country:

> [There is an] urgent need to focus on the cultural dynamics of what is now called *deterritorialization*. This term applies not only to obvious examples such as transnational corporations and money markets, but also to ethnic groups, sectarian movements, and political formations, which increasingly operate in ways that transcend specific territorial boundaries and identities. Deterritorialization...affects the loyalties of groups (especially in the context of complex diasporas), their transnational manipulation of currencies and other forms of wealth and investment, and the strategies of states. The loosening of the bonds between people, wealth, and territories fundamentally alters the basis of cultural reproduction....Deterritorialization...brings laboring populations into the lower-class sectors of relatively wealthy societies, while sometimes creating exaggerated and intensified senses of criticism of, or attachment to, politics in the home state (Appadurai 1991, 192-3).

However, the most profound effects of transnationalism are to be found in the fabric of the lives of migrants themselves, and in an acculturation not to host societies or reculturation to home societies, but to the transmigrational life itself (Gonzalez 1992, 34). The end result might be the "condition of terminal loss" that Edward Said (1984, 49) associates with a life of exile, and that provides grist to the mill of anthropological speculation on identity:

> today, rapidly expanding and quickening mobility of people combines with the refusal of cultural products and practices to "stay put" to give a profound sense of loss of territorial roots, of an erosion of the cultural distinctiveness of places, and of ferment in anthropological theory....apparent deterritorialization of identity (Gupta, Ferguson 1992, 9).

The sense of loss associated with migration works in tandem with the development of a renewed nationalism and enhanced sense of ethnicity in diaspora, characterized by the main feature of a yearning for return to homeland:

> Migration has ambiguities of its own, based on what I would call the dialectics of "belonging" and "longing". The theme of belonging opposes rootedness to uprootedness, establishment to marginality. The theme of longing harps on the desire for change and movement, but relates this to the enigma of arrival, which brings a similar desire to return to what one has left (van der Veer 1995, 4).

Diasporic identity is a theme to which I shall return after examining the patterns of migration of Palestinians to the US over the course of this century. The story of Palestinian emigration to the US demonstrates the commonality these migrants share with societies of other people who are deeply touched by displacement, dispossession, and dispersal.

## History and demography of Palestinian migration to the US until 1967[5]

The Ramallah-el-Bireh area has long been noted for its migrant ties with the US. This relationship is closely associated with the establishment of Christian missionary schools in Ramallah in the late 19th and early 20th centuries (Swan, Saba 1974). One historian of Ramallah notes, "An outstanding event in the history of education in Ramallah was the coming of the Society of Friends, or Quakers [in 1869]" (Shaheen 1982, 63).[6] As a Christian village, Ramallah provided a hospitable home-base for early missionaries to Palestine. The Quakers opened the first school (at first a day school for girls, then separate boarding schools for boys and girls) in Ramallah, and also started schools in the surrounding villages. By the turn of the century, schools in Ramallah were run by the Greek Orthodox, Roman Catholics, Episcopals, Greek Catholics, and Quakers (Shaheen 1982, 63, 67). Azeez Shaheen (1982, 67) writes,

> Because of the large number of schools in it, Ramallah became known as an educational center. Even today, Ramallah is known for its large number of schools and its high standards of education.

A Quaker historian reminisces about the first set of male students at the Friends School, emphasizing both the level of success the first students of the schools achieved, and their propensity to migrate to the US:

> Others in that first group [of the Friends Boys Training Home in Ramallah, opened in 1901] became successful in business and other fields in America and remained to be good citizens, but all kept close family ties with their homeland. There is scarcely a family in Ramallah today that does not have ties with relatives in the United States. When we consider how very simple that first school was and how limited the facilities, also how successful many of that day became, we must recognize native intelligence and willingness to work hard to achieve.
>
> Between 1901 and 1914, 103 boys entered the school--some from other villages and towns and even from Transjordan. Only fourteen received diplomas in that time and the enrollment in no year exceeded forty. A large number migrated to the United States, the first in the chain which has bound Ramallah with the United States in a remarkable way (Jones 1981, 54).[7]

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[5] It is notoriously difficult to document exactly how many Palestinians have emigrated to the US this century. US immigration statistics until 1899 and census statistics until 1920 classified Arabs' country of origin as "Turkey in Asia". "Syrian" was added as a category after 1920. Since 1984 Palestinians have been counted as refugees or nationals of the country of their last residence (Nigem 1986, 630). While the US 1979 Current Population Survey and the 1980 Census of Population have allowed for open-ended self-identifying responses to ancestry questions, this too has remained problematic. While those reporting "Gaza" are coded as such, those reporting the "West Bank" are coded as being born in an "unspecified" country. Those reporting "Palestine" are coded as Israeli-born (Cohen, Tyree 1994, 245).

[6] Swan and Saba (1974) attribute the establishment of the Friends Schools in Ramallah to a group of English Quakers. However, while the first Quaker group to arrive in the West Bank were English, they "gave" this territory to a group of American Quakers, who subsequently established the two schools (Jones 1981).

[7] It should be noted here that both Shaheen (1982) and Jones (1981), when mentioning "Ramallah", mean the town specifically, and not the area in general. Nonetheless, parents from surrounding Muslim and Christian villages also sent their children to these schools, as noted by Jones, thus presumably also having

Both Christians and Muslims sent their sons, and in some cases daughters, to these first missionary schools (Graham-Brown 1980, 152; Jones 1981), and continue to do so today because of the perception that they offer a superior education.

There is a consensus amongst scholars studying Arab migration to the US that the earliest migrants were predominantly Christian (Nigem 1986; Orfalea 1988; Haddad 1994; Naff 1994). Palestinians were no exception (Graham-Brown 1980, 101; Tsimhoni 1983, 55-6). During the last years of Ottoman rule Palestinian emigration rates were higher than during the subsequent British Mandate, which saw low emigration rates (Graham-Brown 1980, 101; Gabriel, Sabatello 1986, 248); however, Arab Christian rates of emigration to the US in general were substantially higher than that for Muslims up until the 1950s (Escribano, el-Joubeh 1981, 151; Haddad 1994, 63).

In 1900/01 the first Ramallans emigrated to the US (Shaheen 1982, 29). At the turn of the century until at least WWI there were no entry barriers for Palestinians other than a clean bill of health at customs (Shaheen 1982, 29-30). According to Shaheen (1982, 30), "Almost all of these early emigrants [between 1900-14] returned to Ramallah and passed away in their hometown". In addition, as many as sixty Ramallans went to Latin America in the same period of time and never returned (Shaheen 1982, 32). While these early migrants to the US returned to Palestine, their descendants often did not. However, these children did visit the home of their parents, sometimes to marry a Ramallan (Shaheen 1982, 29-30, 32).

These earliest migrations have now found their way into family mythologies, as is indicated by this story, told by a Muslim Jerusalemite great-aunt to her American-Palestinian grandniece:

> Before I was born my father and his brother lived in America for ten years. My father had married my mother, Khadija Hamdia, and lived in the Old City of Jerusalem before he went to America. My sister, Muduhia, was conceived in 1910 and your grandfather, Hussein, was conceived in 1912....
> ....My father and his brother, Ismail, paid two men to join the [Turkish] army on their behalf. Since there was going to be war, my father and his brother decided to go to America for a while and make some money.
> My father left to America when Muduhia was two years old and your grandfather was only a couple of months old....
> After ten years my father decided to return to his country. When he came back he bought three pieces of land with his earned money. He bought two pieces of land from what is now the West side of Jerusalem (lost both pieces of land in 1948) and the other piece of land is located directly outside of the Old City which is now Saladin Street.

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an effect on propensity to migrate to the US. It should also be added here that Cainkar (1988) suggests that Muslim Palestinian migration from the Ramallah-el-Bireh region to the US was initially concentrated mainly in the small business-owning and merchant class. She claims that these business-owners were influenced by their Christian customers, who were emigrating themselves or sending their sons to the US. However, it is precisely these families who would have been able to afford to send their sons to be educated at the Friends School. Cainkar does not mention the possible influence of the school.

> Everyone was happy that my father safely returned to his homeland. Since my father had left when your grandfather was a couple of months old and hadn't seen your grandfather for ten years, my mother decided to test him. She made all the kids who lived near them and your grandfather stand in a line. Then, she asked my father to pick out his son. Fortunately, my father figured out who his son was (Hallak 1995, 2-3).

Here we see a family tradition of long migratory stays in the US (this grand-niece's father stayed in the US for over thirty years before returning to Palestine with his family), the political "push" factors that encouraged such migration as well as family networking that made such long-distance migration easier and perhaps possible, and migrations' fruits (purchase of property) later expropriated in the aftermath of the events of 1948. Most importantly, this story reveals a discourse of primordialism: that long absences in foreign lands do not alter family ties, that the line from father to son remains intact, thus also the link of men to their place in Palestine.

In another snippet of family history we learn that there was a certain *cachet* attached to these early families who migrated:

> My mother told me that he was Abed el-Rahman Ibn Mohamed Mustafa, and that he had come to ask for my hand in marriage.
>
> I was numb! I wasn't sad or happy just shocked. Abed el-Rahman was from one of the best families in the village. Everyone spoke of respect about Abed and his nephew Kamil who were the same age. The family of Abed el-Rahman would travel by sea to foreign countries like Brazil, Colombia and the Islands (Mustafa 1995, 3).

Here a paternal grandmother is recalling to her American-Palestinian granddaughter the events surrounding her engagement to her husband. In their village this man was not only highly regarded, but there is a certain aura of romantic mystique in the way the grandmother describes the family and their penchant for migration.

During the British mandate, Shaheen (1982, 32) writes, "most of the younger generation in Ramallah were educated and could speak English well", making it possible to obtain jobs in the British Mandate Government, and thus lessening the impetus to emigrate. Nonetheless, at the Mandate's close these jobs were gone and this and other economic and political factors again created the push to emigrate. At the same time, the US government enacted the "Family Reunion Act" and so "the majority of Ramallah people were able to emigrate as most of them had relatives in the United States." Now, "over 85% of Ramallah people are...in the States."[8]

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[8] It is popularly claimed in Ramallah that all of its original families are gone, and that the city is now composed of "strangers", new-comers, and transients. Old Ramallah, the original centre of residence of the founding Christians, is now largely populated by migrant Hebronite villagers who originally came to work as home servants (Filfil 1996, 38). This new population is Muslim, with the vast majority of the original Christian inhabitants having emigrated (but still retaining their property and renting it to the new inhabitants), or moved to better and newer sections of the city. A few, many of them poor, Christian families remain in the neighbourhood.

Another historian echoes Shaheen's account in her study of Christian demography in Palestine, emphasizing economic and political "push" factors, chain migration, and Christian de-population. Daphne Tsimhoni (1983) follows the pattern of Christian Palestinian emigration, beginning in the late nineteenth century when migrants left in search of better economic opportunities, the Ottoman regime, and the threat of conscription in the lead up to WWI. Their concentration in Palestinian towns and cities facilitated Christian chain migration as well as the maintenance of links to the homeland once in the host country, usually the US. "By 1948", claims Tsimhoni (1983, 56), "the emigrant communities already outnumbered their mother communities."

Unlike other Christian Arab emigrants to the US at this time, Palestinian emigrants were mostly from the urban middle classes, but, as with Arab emigrants from other locales, Palestinian migrants tended to be male.

The 1948 war, and the upheaval and dispossession that accompanied it, created the first large wave of Muslim Palestinian emigration to the US. The effects of the war, and changing immigration laws and economic opportunities, encouraged this emigration. The case of one Ramallah-area Muslim village, Deir Dibwan, most likely reflects the experiences of other area villages:

> Deir Dibwan has had a tradition of migration since the turn of the century, as have many other villages in the area. The early migrations of Deir Dibwan were to Latin American countries, chiefly Brazil, Colombia and Venezuela. In the 1950's, the migration began to shift towards the United States due to the broadening of migration laws and to the expansion of the US economy as compared to that of Latin America, where the opposite process was taking place (Escribano, el-Joubeh 1981, 151).

Between 1952-67 the West Bank population "did not increase much because of a continuous wave of emigration to Arab and other countries" (Hagopian, Zahlan 1974, 59). Those from throughout the Arab world who tended to emigrate to the US during the period between 1948-67 were "largely professionals with high educational backgrounds" (Nigem 1986, 631). Many Palestinians who emigrated during this period tended to be young men in search of both educational and economic opportunities, and also originated from socio-economic backgrounds that were not completely devastated by the 1948 war (Jaafari 1973; Migdal 1980, 59; Gabriel, Sabatello 1986, 249-50). In other words, "the limited financial and human capital of many refugee camp inhabitants diminished both their mobility and economic return on migration" (Gabriel, Sabatello 1986, 250). In the Ramallah-Jerusalem area in particular, young male migrants to the US often came from village land-owning families.[9]

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[9] Although Migdal (1980) does not mention here the size of land-holdings typical in the West Bank, 84% of all land-holders (covering 34% of all possessed land) have on average less than fifty dunams (1 dunam=¼

> With farming affording little basis for future mobility, the village landowners, especially in the villages close to the cities of Jerusalem and Ramallah, used their wealth to place their sons in the West. Although many emigrants simply took jobs in the West or became small merchants, the highest source of status in the village was to have a university-educated son or, even better, one with a graduate degree (Migdal 1980, 65).

However histories of family and chain migration also continued to play a part in migration patterns, with this newest generation of migration being the first to take advantage of education in the US. The quote below is from a maternal grandfather, a peddler, salesman, and worker in the US for the most part of twenty-six years, telling his story of migration to his American-Palestinian granddaughter. His father was a landowner in the village where they lived:

> In 1961 I went to the United States. I moved to the State of North Carolina. I was not the first in my family to go to America. My father had gone to America before I was even born. He settled in Boston, Massachusetts. He stayed there from 1914 to 1921, about seven years. My father-in-law lived in America for 42 years. My brother went to America for school (Ead 1995, 10).

His brother was the first to get an education in the US, and he later relates how his married daughters came to live in the US with their husbands, and how his wife finally visited the US in 1981 to help her daughter with her family after the birth of her third child. This grandfather finally saved enough money to retire and build a house in his home village to which he returned in 1987.

### The effects of Israeli occupation and trends of migration to the US after 1967

With the 1967 war came an intensification of emigration from Palestine, and Arab immigration to the US, including most of the parents of the girls I interviewed. The war, coupled with the passage of the US's 1965 Immigration Act, which became effective mid-way through 1968 and eliminated restrictions against immigration of non-Nordic Europeans, created the structural conditions that encouraged a Palestinian influx to the US. "[T]he most dramatic drain of the population of Deir Dibwan has occurred since 1967", conclude Marisa Escribano and Nazmi el-Joubeh (1981, 151). Other scholars note the tremendous impact of the war on Palestinian emigration, particularly as it affected women, children, and the elderly:

> [M]igration volumes rose in the immediate aftermath of the 1967 War, during which period approximately 170,000 persons emigrated, accounting for one-fifth of the West Bank population....a major portion consisted of women accompanied by dependent children and of the elderly. Their intention was, perhaps, to prevent permanent

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acre) (Heiberg, Øvensen 1993, 23). In her study of Palestinian women in Chicago, Cainkar (1991, 282) found that the majority were from Ramallah-Jerusalem villages of "modest land-holding" backgrounds.

> separation from relatives who were already abroad at the outbreak of the conflict (Gabriel, Sabatello 1986, 250-1).

However, it took several years for the full impact of the Israeli occupation of Jerusalem, the rest of the West Bank, and the Gaza Strip to unfold.

During the era of Jordanian rule the expansion of state education, along with the perception of education as a means to social mobility, contributed to more well-to-do villagers, merchants and land-owners, and urban Palestinians increasing investment in their children's, particularly their sons', educations. With the promise of professional employment in the Jordanian civil service, the Jordanian army, and UNRWA (United Nations Relief and Works Agency), this strategy seemed a viable alternative to agriculture to those villagers capable of educating their sons. By 1967, a whole generation of children was educated with this ambition in the minds of their parents (Graham-Brown 1984b, 225-7).

However, the occupation ended almost all promise of securing professional employment locally, and wrought far-reaching economic and social changes. The economy and class structure of the rural areas were the most affected by the aftermath of 1967 (Graham Brown 1984a, 171). At the time of the occupation, 70% of the West Bank population lived in rural areas, with the majority of those making their living from agriculture (Graham-Brown 1984b, 228). Israeli expropriation of Palestinian land and the emergence of mass Palestinian wage labour in Israel, coupled with the already-existing trend of land fragmentation into unsustainable units as a result of inheritance patterns, all worked to make agriculture an unviable enterprise due to over-use of diminishing tracts of land and the pricing of local agricultural labour out of the means of Palestinian farmers (Graham-Brown 1984a, 171, 172, 184-5). Additionally, those jobs open to Palestinians in Israel were of the lowest status variety, such as unskilled labour in the building trades, agriculture, and service industries and municipal services (Graham-Brown 1984a, 206). This work "was ideologically tainted and because it usually involved hard physical labor, it was shunned by the higher status (and, at first, middle status) village groups" (Migdal 1980, 67). Consequently, there was little scope for the educated, or aspiring to be educated, sons of the village families striving for upward mobility. Finally, as a result of Israel's denial of residency rights to anyone outside of the country at the time of the census held in the West Bank and Gaza shortly after the occupation, those sons destined to inherit their fathers' dominant positions in the village and who were seeking their education abroad were blocked from assuming their rightful role (Migdal 1980, 67).

Education continued to be valued after 1967 as the only asset that cannot be wrested away:

> Hence families will sometimes go to extraordinary lengths to send their children, especially their sons, through school and university or professional training. The remittance economy has played a very important part in making this possible. It is not unusual, for instance, to hear of eldest sons working in the Gulf to put a younger brother through college or medical school (Graham-Brown 1984b, 245).

The Arab world's "brain drain" phenomenon to the US reached its height during the period between 1968-71 (Nigem 1986, 631). Again, Palestine was no exception to this trend. The West Bank middle class was "virtually decimated" by emigration, composed as it was of educated sons of landowners and businessmen, as well as refugees and villagers who had recently gained access to education, who had set their sights on employment in the civil service or army under the Jordanian regime. After 1967, professional work of any kind available to Palestinians was scarce (Graham-Brown 1984a, 213). Skilled and university-educated Palestinians tended to emigrate to the US and Europe while middle-level skilled went to the Gulf (Hagopian, Zahlan 1974, 62).

The emigration rates during this period are dramatic. One Israeli-authored report acknowledges, "The single most important factor affecting demographic trends in the West Bank [for the period 1948-84] is migration" (Benvenisti 1984, 3).[10] Commenting on these same statistics, Meron Benvenisti's report's first chapter is titled "The Missing Age Group" (1984, 1). In the case of Deir Dibwan in the late 1970s, four thousand villagers resided in the village while three thousand resided outside, mostly in the US and particularly in California. Of those still in Deir Dibwan, 70% were either under sixteen years old or over sixty (Escribano, el-Joubeh 1981, 151).

This trend persisted into the 1980s and 1990s. Between 1980-1, approximately three-quarters of the West Bank's natural population increase was eroded by emigration (Benvenisti 1984, 4). The World Bank (1993, 10) reports that about 40% of families in the Occupied Territories had one or more family members residing abroad in 1985, and that these were mainly highly skilled men between the ages of 21-35.[11] In the Ramallah-el-Bireh area 72.9% of a representative sample of households had relatives living abroad in 1995 (PCBS 1996a, 25, 69).

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[10] For instance, 110,000 Palestinians from the West Bank emigrated during the 1969-81 period, equalling 40% of the natural population increase there during that time; during 1966-71 among Palestinian men aged 20-24 the emigration rate reached 50% for that cohort; less than one-quarter of the cohort aged 10-19 in 1961 remained in the West Bank by 1981; only 27% of the male and 35% of the female cohort aged 10-24 in 1961 remained in the West Bank by 1981 (with emigration accounting for 95% of this loss) (Gabriel, Sabatello 1986, 251).

[11] Further, most of the West Bank migrants were married (68.9%), 11.69% were living in the US, 48.62% migrated to seek work, 18.92% to seek education, 29.54% to join a spouse, and only 2.92% were politically motivated to migrate; 76.3% still retained a valid identity card for return, 69.23% were aged 21-35, and 23.08% were 36-50 in 1985 (World Bank 1993, 11).

The parents of the girls I interviewed conform to the overall pattern of Palestinian migration I have been outlining.[12] All of the girls, but three, reported rural parental backgrounds on both sides. Of these, only one girl had two parents from Jerusalem where she and her parents lived at the time of my research. The other two girls' mothers came from Jerusalem and Nablus, while their fathers came from rural towns and villages. With the exception of one, all the fathers from rural villages and towns were from the Ramallah area. Only a handful of these girls' grandfathers had backgrounds that were characterized as anything but "modest", but of these, six of them (three maternal and three paternal) were characterized as "wealthy", "prominent", or "well-off" by the girls. One-third of the paternal grandfathers owned village land and the rest owned businesses or were engaged in skilled labour.[13] The town-dwelling maternal grandfathers owned businesses, while the village dwellers were engaged in skilled and unskilled labour, one owned a business, and two of them worked in white collar jobs with a bank and in the Jordanian civil service. Another worked for the Jordanian police. Twice as many paternal grandfathers had migrated to the US or Latin America than had maternal grandfathers. None of the grandmothers had migrated.

## Demographic and socio-economic characteristics of Arab- and Palestinian-Americans in the US

A study carried out in 1970 of mostly Palestinian students and professionals (9% of the respondents were Jordanian by birth and the rest were Palestinian), residing in the US from three months to twenty-five years, found that "[p]olitical instability at home is not the primary reason why students come to the United States to study, but it is one of the major reasons why they do not return" (Jaafari 1973, 123). The restricted level of job and career opportunities at home was also a significant impediment (Jaafari 1973, 125-9). Nonetheless, while the majority felt that the US was their desired country of residence in three years time and just over one-quarter felt the same way about residence in the US in six years time, only 14% felt that they wanted to be living in the US in nine years time, with the majority wanting to live in "Palestine" after nine years (Jaafari 1973, 130).

There are both similarities and important differences in the demographic profiles of Arab-Americans as a whole compared to Palestinian-Americans in particular. The 1980 US Census estimated 660,000 Arab-Americans, however there are reasons to believe that this was an undercount (Nigem 1986, 632-3). Of these, over half arrived in the US between 1970-80, and

[12] The following data is based strictly on the girls' own knowledge of their parents' backgrounds. Although this knowledge may be imperfect it nonetheless gives good indications of the kinds of migratory trends I have been discussing.

[13] There were three sets of paternal grandparents where this data was unobtainable.

almost half of all single-ancestry Arab-Americans were born in the US (Nigem 1986, 634). Almost all Arab-Americans reported that they are able to speak English "well", with only a tiny proportion reportedly not able to speak English, and over half of single ancestry Arab-Americans were able to speak a language other than English (Nigem 1986, 635). The majority of Arab-Americans lived in the northern and north-eastern US, with most living in cities wherever they may reside in the US.[14] Arab-Americans tended to be well-educated, and better educated than the US population as a whole, with just over half having higher education (Nigem 1986, 638-40).[15] Almost two-thirds tended to be in white collar professions, which was well over the rate for the US population as a whole (Nigem 1986, 639). Arab-American median income was also higher than the average for the US, and a higher proportion of Arab-Americans made over $25,000 in 1980 than other Americans (Nigem 1986, 640). Finally, among Arab-Americans there was a high sex ratio favouring men (Nigem 1986, 642).

Just as it is difficult to determine the numbers of American-Palestinians who have returned to Palestine, it is also difficult to determine the number of Palestinians residing in the US. US Census surveys did not recognize "Palestinian" as a category until 1980, and even then, there are difficulties associated with its use (Nigem 1986, 632-3; Cohen, Tyree 1994, 245-6). If we extrapolate from Yanon Cohen and Andrea Tyree's 1994 findings, there were 21,940 Palestinian-Americans in 1980.[16] The 1980 US Census data from which Cohen and Tyree derived their data reported only 21,288 Palestinian-Americans (Christison 1989, 18). One scholar who has studied the issue puts the figure between 150,000-250,000 (Christison 1989, 18). The Arab-American Action Network (AAAN n.d.) reports that from 1959-98 over 80% of Arab immigrants were from the West Bank.

In "the first systematic description of the socioeconomic characteristics of Palestinians in the United States" (Cohen, Tyree 1994, 244), it was found that one-third of the Palestinian-American population arrived in the US between 1975-80 (Cohen, Tyree 1994, 249). There was a high sex ratio favouring males amongst this population (Cohen, Tyree 1994, 247),[17] and most lived in Chicago, Detroit, Toledo, and the San Francisco Bay area while mostly avoiding rural areas and the southern states except for Florida, Texas, and parts of Virginia close to Washington DC

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[14] The Arab-American Action Network (AAAN n.d.) reports that "almost 20% of these [Arab, mostly Palestinian] immigrants settle in the Chicago area".

[15] Thirty-four percent of Americans on average had completed post-secondary education during the same time-frame (Nigem 1986).

[16] However, Cohen and Tyree (1994) only count those Palestinian-Americans born in the West Bank, including Jerusalem, the Gaza Strip, and Israel. American-born Palestinian-Americans and those Palestinian-Americans born elsewhere are not included in their study.

[17] "Palestinians and Jordanians did not begin family migrations until after WWII. Thus, their first significant American-born generation was formed in the 1950's" (AAAN n.d.).

(Cohen, Tyree 1994, 249). In these aspects we can see that Palestinian-Americans closely resemble other Arab-Americans.

However, when it comes to education and occupations, Palestinian-Americans are different from other Arab-Americans. Palestinian men in the US tend to be educated at the post-secondary level at the same rate as Americans, but Palestinian women's access to university or college education is much less. A significant number of Palestinian men and women had only elementary education or less (Cohen, Tyree 1994, 248-9).[18] A good proportion of both Palestinian men and women were employed in professional, technical, or managerial work.[19] Sales and self-employment were the next most reported occupations.[20] Of the self-employed, almost two-thirds either owned groceries or were engaged in other retail trades (Cohen, Tyree 1994, 248).[21] In effect, almost half of all Palestinian workers in the US engage in trade (Cohen, Tyree 1994, 249).[22] This stands as a stark contrast to the concentration of other Arab-American groups in white collar and professional fields. Finally, consistent with reports of other Arab-Americans, the early arrivers tended to have higher incomes that the later arrivers, but the Palestinian-Americans tended on average to have a mean family income[23] of $25,400 (Cohen, Tyree 1994, 250-1), as compared to Arab-Americans' general average individual income of $25,000 during the same period.

In studies of two major cities of residence for Arab-Americans, and Palestinians in particular, Chicago[24] and Detroit, it is possible to discern some patterns of residence and mobility that are contingent on class, religion, homeland origins, and timing of immigration of Arab-Americans. In many of these respects Arab- and Palestinian-Americans seem to follow patterns also found amongst Hispanic-Americans and Asian-Americans. African-Americans, however, lead highly segregated lives in US cities (Massey, Denton 1988).

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[18] Only 34% of the men and 11% of the women had graduated from college, and 14.5% and 26.9% had only elementary schooling or less (Cohen, Tyree 1994, 248-9).

[19] Forty percent of Palestinian-American women are in the labour force, and 39.9% of men and 30.9% of women are in the fields mentioned above (Cohen, Tyree 1994, 248).

[20] Cohen and Tyree report that the proportion of self-employed Palestinian-Americans is higher than the rate for native-born American men and for all other immigrant groups to the US (1994, 250).

[21] A full 70% of the self-employed men owned either grocery stores or restaurants, and 40% of men in retail and wholesale trades were engaged in grocery stores (Cohen, Tyree 1994, 250).

[22] "Palestinians and Jordanians (Christian and Muslim) have stayed in small business as well as moved into the professions. They began with small businesses in African-American neighborhoods in the 1920's. They continue to run small businesses in African-American and poor neighborhoods where the business risks are high and chain stores do not seek to invest" (AAAN n.d.).

[23] "Family income" stands in contrast to Nigem's (1986) findings of individual Arab-American earnings.

[24] Chicago has the fourth largest concentration of Palestinian-Americans in the US, and is highly representative of the general Palestinian-American community in terms of social class, regional, and occupational groupings. Most of the Palestinian-Americans in Chicago, as in the rest of the US, are from the Ramallah-Jerusalem area (Cainkar 1994, 87).

The largest and fastest-growing Arab-American community in the US in the early 1980s was in Detroit (Abraham 1983, 88, 89-90). Like Chicago, there has been a history of chain migration there, which not only aided the growth of the community, but also ensured a commonality of homeland origins amongst the various Arab groups in the two cities (Abraham 1983, 92; Cainkar 1994, 92). After WWII when it became apparent that their stay in the US might not remain merely temporary or short-lived, male migrants returned to their home countries to get married, or if married sent for their wives and children (Abraham 1983, 92). Both in Detroit and in Chicago, the majority of Palestinian-Americans arrived after 1948 and can trace their origins to the Ramallah-Jerusalem area (Abraham 1983, 95, 98; Cainkar 1994, 96).

In Detroit, residential areas vary widely in density of Arab inhabitants (the following description is taken from Abraham 1983). Three of the four most densely Arab-populated areas are inhabited by Muslims, including Dearborn which is 75% Arab-American. The least densely populated Arab-American areas are inhabited by Christians, including Palestinian, in the east, west, and north-western suburbs. Except for Dearborn, all the residential areas are composed of single nationality-religious groups and are remarkably socially homogeneous. An example is the western suburbs, which are populated by Christian Palestinians from Ramallah who consider themselves to be middle class. Palestinian residents of the Southend in Dearborn are almost all Muslim and are highly concentrated in this enclave, are from el-Bireh and Beit Hanina, and are working class. They have recently been moving into south-west Detroit, which like Dearborn is beginning to act as a "receiving" area for new immigrants.

The Southend of Dearborn, while also populated by Eastern Europeans and Americans from the rural south and the rest of Michigan, is overwhelmingly Arab-American, with Palestinians composing 8% of the total population of the area:

> So pervasive is the Arabic atmosphere that to many non-Arabs who work and live in the area, the most frequent expression heard is the feeling of being in a "foreign country" in one's own neighborhood (Abraham, Abraham, Aswad 1983, 167).

Characterized by chain migration, a majority of its Arab-American residents were born outside of the US. As they become more upwardly mobile, Arab-Americans tend to move out of the Southend and into the north-east. The Southend is a working-class community, given its proximity to the Ford Rouge Complex.[25] While social activity in the mosque and the traditional Arab coffeehouse is the norm for men in the working-class Dearborn community, social activities amongst middle class Arab-Americans in surrounding communities more often take place in

[25] Its working class character distinguishes it from other Arab-American communities, according to the authors (Abraham, Abraham, Aswad 1983, 169 n. 10), which tend to fall into the self-employed or professional/managerial ranks.

more westernised clubs, church associations, and reciprocal home visiting (this description has been taken from Abraham, Abraham, Aswad 1983).

In 1940s Chicago Muslim Palestinians lived in or near African-American neighbourhoods, but began moving south-westerly as their neighbourhoods deteriorated (the following description is taken from AAAN n.d. and Cainkar 1994). Christian Palestinians began settling on the north side of the city, which has continued to grow since the 1960s and is a mixed Arab community of Palestinians, Jordanians, Iraqis, and Assyrians.[26] The largest Arab community in Chicago is in the south-side of the city, including the south-west suburbs where more economically upwardly mobile Arabs moved in the 1980s and 90s. Middle- and upper-middle class Palestinians had at least one member of the family in the US before 1967 and tended to live in white middle-class suburban neighbourhoods.

The south-side is home to new Arab immigrants and older immigrants who are not economically upwardly mobile, and is a mixed neighbourhood of Palestinians, Jordanians, Lebanese, African-Americans, Hispanics, and Eastern Europeans. Lower-middle and upper-lower class Palestinians in Chicago tend to have had their first family member resident in the US after 1967 and also tend to settle in urban neighbourhoods near other Palestinians, such as in the south-side.

Most Arab-Americans living in the old south-side neighbourhood think that it is a "bad" neighbourhood due to crime, drugs, and gangs, but most also liked the proximity to other Arabs and Arab stores, the mosques, and work. Almost half are supported by Public Aid. Those living in the south-west suburbs think their neighbourhood is "good" and like their neighbourhood, however almost one-third feel that their "white" neighbours don't like their presence in the neighbourhood and others feel isolated from their neighbours, missing the sense of community they experienced in the Middle East. Almost half are business-owners, one-quarter are supported by Public Aid, and the rest are engaged in skilled and unskilled labour.

In her study of Palestinians in Chicago, Louise Cainkar (1988, 1994) divides Palestinian-Americans into three distinct groupings: the chain migrants who have a long-standing family history of migration to and settlement in the US, and whose Palestinian origins are rooted in the land-owning and educated village elite; the "new peasant migrants" who have little family history of US emigration, arrived in the US after 1967 and who are mostly from village families with few or small land-holdings; the autonomous migrants who have no family history of US emigration, come from areas other than Ramallah-Jerusalem (unlike the other two groups), and

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[26] In Chicago, "because they preferred to live near their places of business, Palestinian Muslim families did not settle in a geographic area but were scattered, mostly throughout the south side of Chicago" (Cainkar 1991, 283).

whose families in Palestine are mostly well-off urban merchants or large land-holders.[27] The chain migrants are assisted in their resettlement in the US by their families who have already established themselves, they tend to insert themselves rapidly and easily into the American middle and upper-middle classes, and are generally self-employed retail merchants or involved in other business sectors such as real estate, insurance, or travel agencies. The "new peasant migrants", who have less education than the other two groups, also tend to be self-employed retail merchants or make their living in unskilled industrial labour and are positioned in the upper-lower and lower-middle classes in the US. The autonomous migrants cluster in professional, semi-professional, and skilled technical work and are generally located in the American middle and lower-middle classes. While chain migrants do not necessarily live near each other in the same "white" suburban neighbourhoods, (they might be scattered across various suburbs) they tend to have family members in the same city. The "new peasant migrants" tend to cluster in one ethnically and racially mixed neighbourhood close to the inner city area, and the autonomous migrants are isolated and scattered across various neighbourhoods composed of both "whites" and immigrants from other countries. While Cainkar's sample is restricted to Chicago, she contends that the city "provides a balanced portrait of Palestinians in the United States since it is not skewed to overrepresent any one social class, regional, or occupational grouping of Palestinian immigrants to the United States" (1994, 87). Her interviewees were mostly from the chain migrant and "new peasant migrant" groups (Cainkar 1988).

The girls I interviewed and their families differed in important ways from the general picture painted here of Palestinians in the US. Unlike the Palestinians in Detroit discussed by Abraham (1983), those in Dearborn discussed by Sameer Abraham, Nabeel Abraham, and Barbara Aswad (1983), and the Palestinians in Chicago discussed by the AAAN (n.d.) and Cainkar (1988, 1991, 1994), almost all of the girls I spoke to did not live in US cities noted for their prominent or sizeable Palestinian or Arab communities. Even one of the girls who did live in such a city reported that she and her family had little to do with the Palestinian-American community. While many of the girls claimed that their grandfathers had previously migrated to the US, many of these same grandparents had also returned to Palestine. Some reported that they had aunts and uncles in the US, brothers or sisters of their parents who had migrated at the same time, but even in these cases they did not necessarily live in the same American communities, and were sometimes separated by great distances. In terms of family migration history, Palestinian class and regional origins, and occupation in the US they resembled either the chain migrants or the "new peasant migrants", but they mostly lived in white upper-middle and middle class neighbourhoods, usually without any other family members in their neighbourhoods or cities of residence. In this last aspect they more closely resembled Cainkar's autonomous migrants than

[27] Cainkar does not examine this last particular grouping in any depth.

any of the other two categories of immigrants. Their social isolation in the US might go a long way to explain their relocation to the West Bank. Although Cainkar reports that chain migrant and "new peasant migrant" Palestinian women all claimed that they would return to Palestine if a state was created, their recreation of familial and neighbourly relations in the US mitigates much of the social need to do so. Autonomous migrants, and the families of the girls I spoke to who lived in the US without the social and economic support of Palestinian neighbours and families, might find relocation to the West Bank a much more attractive option.

There are also important differences and similarities between the girls I spoke to and Cohen and Tyree's (1994) sample of Palestinians in the US. Fewer of the fathers of the girls I knew had graduated from post-secondary education than the average found by Cohen and Tyree (1994), and in contrast to their findings on Palestinian women's levels of education, my respondents' mothers were a highly educated group with just over half having obtained some education from, or graduated from post-secondary educational institutions, ranging from vocational or technical school to post-graduate studies. Only one mother had less than a grade 6 education. Remarkably, three of the girls' mothers had a higher level of education than their husbands. Many of the fathers of the girls I interviewed returned to Palestine after migrating to the US in order to marry a girl from their village or a cousin. These women, the girls' mothers, followed their husbands to the US. Three mothers continued their education to a post-secondary or graduate level in the US or Canada with the support and encouragement of their husbands. The phenomenon of wives having a higher level of education than their husbands, their daughters informed me, is rare. Laila told me that her father supported her mother in studying for her MA, justifying it on the basis that an educated woman makes a better mother,[28] but his family warned him that she would begin to "get ideas." Linda's mother fought bitterly with her husband, whose own family was against the idea of his wife attaining post-secondary education, to continue with her education in the US. She completed her high school in the US and wanted to attend university. Her BA degree was won despite much struggle with her husband and the burden of raising her first child. Linda told me that it was important to her mother to attend university so that she could "indulge in the fantasy of being someone important, a professional". Her struggle with her husband touched on his own disappointment of never being able to complete his own university education. When his wife received her degree, it "hurt at this disappointment". She was not "allowed" to work afterwards.

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[28] Notice how this husband's rationale supporting his wife's education parallels dominant conservative nationalist-modernisation discourses in the Middle East and other early third world nationalist discourses in support of education for women. See Haddad (1984), Jayawardena (1988), and Hatem (1993) for discussions of discourses on women in the Middle East and how they treat issues such as education, gender relations in marriage and the family, and women's proper social role.

Two-thirds of the girls' fathers owned their own businesses--a wildly disproportionate number compared to Cohen and Tyree's (1994) figure of one-third, and even higher than the AAAN's findings for Arab-Americans in the white Chicago suburbs. Three others were professionals, one was a skilled labourer, and another held a white collar clerical job. While several girls mentioned that their mothers "helped" in the family store, it is conceivable that many more did so without their daughters mentioning this fact. Three of the mothers held professional jobs, another was a skilled worker, and over half were housewives. If "helping" in the store is not considered participating in the paid wage labour force, then slightly fewer mothers participated in the work force than Cohen and Tyree's (1994) findings reveal.

Finally, all but one of the girls reported living in an upper-middle or middle class neighbourhood (seven reported living in an upper-middle class neighbourhood, another seven claimed a middle class neighbourhood in the US, and the remaining girl reported living in a lower-middle class neighbourhood in the US). Just under two-thirds lived in areas characterized as "white" or "mostly white". Another two girls lived in mixed neighbourhoods where there were no other Arab families resident. The remainder lived in mixed neighbourhoods where other Arab, but non-Palestinian, families were also living. All but three girls lived in a metropolitan area, but only three came from the north or north-eastern US, and another three came from Texas and Florida. One came from western Canada, and the rest came from areas of the US not normally associated with Palestinian residence.

## Transnationalism and diasporic existences

In the post-1967 era, Palestinian migrants to the Americas are regularly reminded of their Palestinian origins:

> News of the [continuing conflict in Palestine]...has served as a constant reminder to the migrants [Christian Bethlehemites in Honduras] of their origins and at the same time it has perpetuated the migration. The resulting continual presence of unacculturated newcomers has underlined the foreign origin of the Arab population to both Hondurans and the Palestinians themselves (Gonzalez 1989b, 88).

Commentators reporting on Muslim, Arab-, and Palestinian-American experience in the US speak of generations of migrants as distinct entities, and describe the post-1967 Arab and Muslim migration as distinctly more "traditional" and assertive about maintaining their difference in the face of mainstream American culture.[29] This results not only in confrontation with white Christian America but also in contestation within the Arab and Muslim communities about what

it means to be Muslim and/or Arab in the US. The forms this often takes within these communities are struggles over leadership and practices within community mosques and Arab and/or Muslim community groups. Whereas the earlier generations of migrants and their children have taken a more American assimilationist and accommodating approach to their Arab and Muslim identities, this new generation of migrants is more oriented to preserving practices and ideas they have brought from their homelands (Haddad 1983; Abu-Laban 1991; Cainkar 1994).

Nonetheless, these traditions are reflexive of an invention or reinvention of practices these migrants believe to be consistent with their homeland cultures (Hobsbawm 1983) and are rooted in the fact that migrants are not just exiles from their homelands, but are also "migrant[s] from [their] past" (Rushdie 1985, 182). As Appadurai (1991, 193) notes about this process: "the homeland is partly invented, existing only in the imagination of the deterritorialized groups". In effect, these migrants are attempting to preserve an ethos of being "Muslim" or "Arab" that has as its basis a nostalgia for home, and an idealised and pure notion of the past and of what it is to be and live as a "true" Palestinian, Pakistani, or Iraqi.[30]

This invention of past traditions is played out not only in mosques, community groups, and migrant families resident in the US, but also engages the participation of families in the home country in the care of their children and is related to transnationalism or "dual-place identity":

> Dual-place identity is also kept alive by the process of internationalizing the social ties of family and extended kin....the culturally approved practice of sending one's child to be "cared for" by female kin or close friends [in the Caribbean] for shorter or longer periods of time [is part of the internationalizing of kin ties in the NYC Caribbean community] (Sutton 1992, 236).

Yet this "dual-place identity", frequently achieved and embodied in the practice of sending adolescent children back to the homeland to be educated in the local culture, comes at an emotional cost to families, and in particular to the children themselves. One of the girls I spoke to, Cindy, related her experience, explaining, "At first I felt very sad and weird, that I wasn't loved, but then I began to feel better--my dad used to call every two or three days to see how we were doing." Another, Aisha, said that growing up in Palestine was difficult not only because of the *intifada* conditions in her village, but also because it was the first time that she and her family (siblings and mother) were separated from her father for any length of time. When her mother

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[29] As we will see in chapter 4, the most important site of transmission of these versions of culture is the family.

[30] As Nacify (1991, 298-9) points out, "contradictions...will inevitably exist between the notion of the past and of history that the exiles have produced for themselves, and those imagined by the people living in the home country. Both are imaginary and invented; coming from different positionalities and locations (in time and space), they will continue to diverge. The exilic commonality with home, then, is illusory."

returned to the US with their baby brother to be with her father, she insisted on moving with them. Only a minority of the girls I spoke to were living in Palestine with their entire nuclear family intact. The majority of the girls had fathers or both parents and some or all of their siblings still living in the US.

For many of the girls, the decision to send them to Palestine to live was made without their knowledge or participation, and they were kept there, at least initially, against their will. Some were deceived into thinking they were just on a summer holiday to visit their family in the West Bank and were told at the last minute (before their parents or father returned to the US) that it was to be a permanent or semi-permanent stay. While some of the girls reported that their parents had always said that they would return to Palestine, most of these girls never believed in the possibility of it really happening: "They always had it in their heads that they were coming back but it just never 'clicked' [for me] that it would happen," Nadia said to me. Some girls were particularly bitter about their experience and yearned for return to the US. Dalal remembered how her mother and uncles had continually told her how beautiful the *balad* (village, homeland) was, and how it was just like America, that she could do whatever she wanted to there. The realities of living in a Palestinian village contrasted sharply with her family's version of Palestine immediately upon her return, in which she was "tricked" into participating. She said, "When I first got here I thought, 'I'm living in hell.'" She remembered crying continually and wanting to go back to the US right away, that she "couldn't believe what...[she] had gotten into."

While actual return and the practice of "dual-place identity" often disrupts and divides families as much as it may work to unite nuclear families with their extended kin, the "myth of return" frequently is the glue which holds individuals in migrant communities together as a diaspora. Sometimes the myth becomes almost a ritual, as when Nancy told me that every New Year her parents would tell her and her siblings that they were going to return. They began building a house in their home village when she was in grade 6 and the family was all still resident in the US, but "My parents have always wanted to come back here [to Palestine]....Every year they'd say, 'Next year you're going back.'"

In other diasporic communities "the myth of return serves to solidify ethnic consciousness and solidarity when religion can no longer do so" (Safran 1991, 91), but in the Palestinian case ethnic consciousness and religion have become conflated. The most frequent explanation the girls I spoke to gave for their "return" to Palestine was so that they could "learn more about our

religion".[31] The whole notion that these girls, most of whom had never lived in Palestine and had usually only visited as young children during pre-*intifada* summers, are "returnees" is based on a territorialisation and temporalisation of identity and culture in the sense that Palestinian identity and Muslim-Palestinian culture are things one must return to in order to acquire:

> Who has not known, at this moment, the surge of an overwhelming nostalgia for lost origins, for 'times past'? And yet, this 'return to the beginning' is like the imaginary in Lacan--it can neither be fulfilled nor requited, and hence is the beginning of the symbolic, of representation, the infinitely renewable source of desire, memory, myth, search, discovery...(Hall 1994, 402).

However, as James Clifford notes, this territorialised and temporalised notion of Muslim-Palestinian culture and identity is caught in a dialectic between being "here" and not being "there": "Diaspora cultures thus mediate, in a lived tension, the experiences of separation and entanglement, of living here and remembering/desiring another place" (Clifford 1994, 311). Ironically, temporal space is also linked to the intensity of imagining the homeland, and this remembering/imagining serves to ever more territorialise/anchor the diaspora (Gupta, Ferguson 1992, 10-11). Or, in other words: "Temporalizing and memory-making mediate the identity of people and heritage in space just as the representation and organization of space mediates the identity of people and heritage through time" (Alonso 1994, 387).

In Akhil Gupta's and James Ferguson's (1992) observation there is not only the contradiction between blurred memories of the actual place and sharp ideas of the imaginary place, but also between the imagining of a far away home and its effect of rooting the diaspora away from its home. A third irony is that those who may have never "felt" Palestinian or "Indian" or "Lebanese" in Palestine, India, or Lebanon begin to do so when away:

> In general, the migratory experience can lead to more embracing identifications on the margin of the host society: Those who do not think of themselves as Indians before migration become Indians in the diaspora. The element of romanticization which is present in every nationalism is even stronger among nostalgic migrants, who often form a rosy picture of the country they have left and are able to imagine the nation where it did not exist before (van der Veer 1995, 7).

Not only do they feel "Palestinian" or "Indian" in a way they never felt in Palestine or in India, but to be "Palestinian" or "Indian" is infused with the tinge of nostalgia that blurs all of the sharp edges that are felt in the actual everyday experience of living in the homeland. For instance, the Christian Palestinian Bethlehemites in Honduras remember an idyllic garden homeland: "In the diaspora they remember with great nostalgia their community's beauty, its olive groves, vineyards, orchards of almond and fig trees, and they romanticize the distinctive peasant costume

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[31] I will discuss in chapter 4 how this is also an idiomatic expression and metaphor that represents "maintenance or preservation of family honour".

worn by many women until the 1930s" (Gonzalez 1989b, 75-6). A Palestinian-American daughter reminisces about her Palestinian father, a migrant to the US:

> My father, never quite reconciled to his urban life, spoke longingly of the groves of orange and olive trees, the tomato plants and squash vines, by which Palestinian farmers live....His strong attachment to the earth--an emotion I have come to recognize among Palestinians--made me understand his dispossession as a particular form of violence (Majaj 1994, 69).

Several of the girls I interviewed recalled their parents' reminiscences of the *balad.* Aisha told me that as a child in the US, her parents' nostalgia made the *balad* a place of myth and romance and utopia, it was the place they, herself, her parents and siblings, all wanted to be. "My parents never said anything bad about it", she recalled. The disaster of 1948, the 1967 occupation, the poverty and social and material hardships of rural village life are all forgotten, glossed over by the memories borne of yearning for home. Dina, whose parents had also extolled the beauties of the *balad,* recalled her first reactions to seeing Palestine since she was a toddler during a summer of the *intifada.* She remembered arriving with her parents through the airport in Tel Aviv where the surrounding environs seemed "normal". But then they drove into a West Bank covered in political graffiti and strewn with garbage. Her first thoughts were, "Is this whole thing a ghetto?[32] This is what you really wanted us to see all these years?" She told me, "I expected something cleaner."

However, not all returns are characterized by this kind of disjuncture. There are moments and experiences of return that bridge loss and irretrievable time. Alia, who had lived with her parents in their West Bank village between the years of 1985-89, only returning to the US because of the school closures imposed by the Israeli military during the *intifada,* related a sweet poignant story of her first morning back in Palestine in 1995. She and her mother had risen just before dawn to wash for morning prayers when the *imam* began to sing the first call to prayer of the new day. Their eyes met, and her mother said to her, "Do you know how long I've waited to hear this?" They both cried as they listened until the end.

"Exile is the unhealable rift forced between a human being and a native place, between the self and its true home" (Said 1984, 49), and it is exile that is the defining feature of the diasporic condition. And this loss is not only experienced by the generation riven from its homeland, but is passed down to their children, reaching down generationally to shape what it means to be Palestinian-American:

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[32] Note the American referencing signalled by the use of "ghetto" where this girl's only reference to the "ghetto" was the phenomenon of the American inner city.

> While all of us live among "normal" people, people with complete lives, they seem to us hopelessly out of reach, with their countries, their familial continuity, their societies intact. How does a Palestinian father tell his son and daughter that Lebanon (Egypt, Syria, Jordan, New York) is where we are, but not where we are *from*? How does a mother confirm her intimate recollections of childhood in Palestine to her children, now that the facts, the places, even the names, are no longer allowed to exist? (Said 1986, 23).

While many writers have put definitions around the concept of "diaspora";[33] the themes of "loss" and "yearning", and a reconstruction of the group as a unique "people", seem to be common features (Nacify 1991; Safran 1991, 83-4; Gonzalez 1992, 31, 33; Basch, Schiller, Blanc 1994, 269; Clifford 1994, 304; Sheffer 1995, 9).

The Palestinian diaspora, Said (1984, 51) reminds us, has the dubious distinction of being defined by "the most poignant of exile's fates, which is to be exiled by exiles."[34] As Said has so evocatively described above, the first generation of Palestinians to be exiled is now transmitting this diasporic state to their children:

> most of the Palestinians alive today were born in exile; theirs is an inherited status....an overwhelming majority...of the persons who identify themselves as Arab Palestinians have never directly known their "native place" (soil and full-functioning society), that is, they have never experienced a physical and/or social environment to which they belonged naturally and without rift (Abu-Lughod 1988, 63).

However, even if resident in their "native place", Janet Abu-Lughod (1988, 62) makes the claim that Palestinians are exiles on their home turf. They are "a people rooted in a native land and in a native social milieu, exiles, in the sense of an 'unhealable rift between past and present'...[as] the entire ground has been transformed underfoot" (Abu-Lughod 1988, 62). One need only read the account of Said's (1992b, 47, 48) return to Palestine after an absence of forty-five years to grasp the disjuncture and pain such a state produces:

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[33] Ahmed and Donnan (1994, 6-7) speak of the "Muslim diaspora"; however, the notion of a singular de-nationalised Muslim diaspora seems inconsistent with the fact that Islam is not exclusively rooted to one homeland, and that as a religion which historically accepts and at times has encouraged conversion, especially during the age of the great 'Abbasid and Umayyad Muslim empires (Hourani 1991), associating Islam with territorialisation seems to be contradictory.

[34] Although some writers use the Jews as a prototype for the condition of diaspora (Safran 1991), this begs some important questions: Do Jews who have been born and live outside of Israel, along with their immediate ancestors, experience the loss of native place associated with other diasporas? How many generations/centuries can this sense of loss be meaningfully transmitted? What about assimilation, and at what point do diasporic communities cease to be diasporas and begin to be minority populations/citizens of a nation-state? Indeed, and I believe more accurately, Said has elsewhere characterized European Jewish Zionism as a white settler movement (Said 1992a; also see Halbrook 1972 and Stasiulis, Yuval-Davis 1995). However, this is only strictly accurate when speaking of pre-WWII European Jewish immigration to Palestine. In the immediate post-Holocaust era European Jews migrated to Palestine, and later Israel, as refugees. Nonetheless, in the post-1967 era with the rise of settlements in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip settlerism again becomes a legitimate analytical framework to apply to Jewish migration from Israel to Palestine, or from outside Israel directly to Palestine.

> The Palestine I left as a twelve-year-old and the Israel I had just set down in are very different places....
> ...my family and I were driven up to Jerusalem, that extraordinary city, in the quickly darkening twilight. When we arrived a brilliant star-dotted sky swept by cold winds vaulted the city's heights, and as we crossed the handsome threshold of the American Colony Hotel, I was already conscious of trying to stem the torrent of memories, expectations, and disoriented impressions that assaulted me.
>
> Tentatively at first, boldly later, I found myself repeating to myself that I did have a right to be here, that I was a native, and that nearly everything in my early life could be traced to the city of my birth....my family...was connected to a whole network of other families--was, in fact, as Palestinian as one could be. What remained now? I asked myself. What could be reconstituted through memory and then experienced in a ten-day visit, despite the politics of extreme antagonism that I had lived for forty-five years?

Here is the romantic entrance into a mystical Jerusalem, returned to after a lifetime of remembering and mourning. A native son, having to "pinch" himself into believing that he really is back, and belongs to, the "city of his birth", which has been transformed by the forces of history and politics into an entity that he must "reconstitute through memory" in a defiant act against temporal realities.

Many Palestinians, however, never have returned in any literal sense. Instead, many in the diaspora live on the "myth of return", a metaphorical link to homeland that is never entirely resolved in the lived tension of dreaming of home but caught in the pragmatics of existing in a foreign land:

> the myth [of return] acts as a cohesive force, whose "function" is to consolidate the kinship boundaries of the community and their links with the homeland...the psychological aspect of this myth...enables the migrant to suspend his total immersion or assimilation in the host society. The myth is, therefore, a pragmatic solution to the dilemma of being part of two contexts, two countries and two sets of norms and values, which may not only be different, but in most cases contradictory (al-Rasheed 1994, 200).

Yet literal return is not necessarily the solution to what is, in effect, an existential dilemma:

> People ask us, as if looking into an exhibit case, "What is it that you Palestinians want?"--as if we can put our demands into a single neat phrase. All of us speak of *awdah*, "return", but do we mean that literally, or do we mean "we must restore ourselves to ourselves"?...But is there any place that fits us, together with our accumulated memories and experiences?...The further we get from the Palestine of our past, the more precarious our status, the more disrupted our being, the more intermittent our presence (Said 1986, 33-4).

Instead, new ways of living and being Palestinian are being constructed in the diaspora. This diasporic "Palestinianness" often bridges not being "there" and being "here", in practices of transnationalism. This way of living across borders has a long history amongst Palestinian migrants. In the following passage a Palestinian grandfather who lived many years in the US tells his American-Palestinian granddaughter of one way in which his life as a Palestinian in the US bridged borders and implicated families on two continents:

> When I went to America, I needed to work. But I could not work because I had a visitor's visa. I needed a job, but I couldn't get a job until I had citizenship. So I married an American woman named Mayzil Gardner....I was still married to Aziza [his wife in Palestine]. I told both wives that there was the other wife. I lived with Mayzil in the towns of Sanfrid and Wilmington, North Carolina until 1967 (Ead 1995, 10-11).

This man's two wives knew about each other. He migrated to the US to make money to support his Palestinian wife and children. He married an American woman to make this possible, and perhaps also to replicate a form of domestic life that he enjoyed in Palestine. When the 1967 war struck and she showed little sympathy, he decided to get a divorce.

In another story a grandmother's husband migrated to Latin America and married a Colombian woman there. He maintained his relationships with his Palestinian wife and children in Palestine, and the Palestinian sons eventually joined their father and his Colombian wife in the Virgin Islands, where the grandmother's American-Palestinian granddaughter later was born and grew up. This granddaughter eventually "returned" to her father's home village and lived with this very same grandmother in the West Bank (Mustafa 1995).

However, transnationalism also implies an experience that includes more than physical and material facts that stretch across borders. Felt ways of being and consciousness are also part of transnational lives, especially as they are bound up with affective attachments to the homeland and experiences of exclusion in the host country. This dynamic frequently constructs new ethnic identities that are neither fully consistent with the homeland or with the host country:

> The process may not be as much about being African or Chinese, as about being American or British, or wherever one has settled, differently. It is also about feeling global. Islam, like Judaism in a predominantly Christian culture, can offer a sense of attachment elsewhere, to a different temporality and vision, a discrepant modernity (Clifford 1994, 311-12).

Here Clifford (1994) speaks of thinking and being transnationally, of constructing new transnational identities, and by borrowing from Said (1984), describing this process as living in counterpoint.

Yet living in diaspora no longer needs to mean that people live in permanent or long-term physical exile from their homelands. National borders, thanks to new information technologies and inexpensive transportation links, are permeable in this postmodern age[35] (Sharpe 1995, 188).

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[35] Nonetheless, political barriers may increase. For instance, those Palestinians whose homes came under occupation in 1967 and were out of country at the time lost their residency rights to their homes and Palestine. Palestinians who left after 1967 lost their residency rights if they did not return periodically (as

Not only is there an increased permeability of borders, but dispersed peoples who would have once been distanced from homelands by huge distances and political barriers, now increasingly find themselves in "border relations" with those same homelands as a result of access to modern transportation and communication technologies (Clifford 1994, 304). Thence, "the concrete predicaments denoted by the terms *border* and *diaspora* bleed into one another" (Clifford 1994, 304), promoting the development of new forms of identity rooted in biterritorialised or cross-territorialised ways of being and acting usually associated with situation in literal borderlands (Kearney 1991; Rouse 1991).

Palestinian-Americans organised their communities in the US to support the *intifada*, teach their children Arabic, pray in mosques, learn *dabka* (traditional Arab folk dance) at the local Arab community centre, hang *tatriz* (embroidery works) on the walls of their homes in the suburbs, and celebrate by eating *mansaf* (a dish of lamb, rice, and yoghurt sauce). When in Palestine, American-Palestinians use the latest American slang, listen to rap music, wear the latest most popular American designer clothes and running shoes, watch American videos on their VCRs brought from the US, and eat American convenience foods like Kellog's Corn Flakes, tortilla chips and salsa, and microwave popcorn. This cultural fluidity is cultivated through the transportation of ideas, goods, and values bidirectionally, and lived experiences in both the US and Palestine.[36]

The girls I interviewed related varied experiences of transnationalism. While some girls had never been to Palestine before coming there to live, or had not been there since their toddler years, others had visited there during the summer months regularly before the *intifada*. A few had lived in Palestine before. Some of their parents had regularly sent money to their families back in Palestine, and many of their parents built houses in their home villages during their years of residence in the US, in anticipation of permanent return. Once "returned" to Palestine, many girls lived with only part of their nuclear family. Older brothers and married sisters frequently returned to or remained in the US. Many fathers retained their businesses in the US and travelled back and forth between the US and Palestine, carrying coveted American consumer goods with them to their wives and children in the West Bank and bringing news of the homeland back to the US with them to relate to their compatriots and family members there. Occasionally a girl, envied by her peers, was allowed to return to the US for part of a summer, under the protection of her father and mother, and frequently the girls dreamt of returning to the US to go to university.

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set by the Israeli military occupation authority) to the country. These strictures, of course, violate international law.

[36] I use these examples and images in a metaphorical sense. Not all American-Palestinian daughters are taught Arabic or like to eat *mansaf* or have access to an Arab-American community centre in the US. Nor do they all wear Levis and Nike clothing or like rap or regularly eat American convenience food in

In the high schools opened in the West Bank specifically to cater to them, American-Palestinian students studied for their SATs (US university entrance exams), produced American-style high school yearbooks, and held their own versions of "grads" (graduation celebrations) which are commonly participated in by every graduating American high school senior.[37] E-mail technology and transatlantic gossip networks enabled them to maintain connections with the America they left, and CNN and "Baywatch" and "The Bold and the Beautiful" were continually available touchstones of US media and pop culture. Going to the McDonalds or shopping in the Jerusalem Mall on the "west-side", or the "J-side" as some called it, or frequenting the Subway in el-Bireh or the Baker's Dozen and Checkers in Ramallah (all three North American fast-food franchises are owned by Canadian- and American-Palestinians) repeated the activity of "hanging out" in public spaces commonly practised by suburban US adolescents. All of these venues and practices afforded American-Palestinian teenagers the ability to pick up their lived American experience in Palestine and fantasise their Americanness in the West Bank. At the same time, their fathers lived a different, more literal transnational existence, commuting between work in the US and home in a Palestinian village.

The transnational realities for these girls also included learning how to live as Palestinians, often for the first time, in what was for them a foreign homeland. The requirement to speak Arabic, the social expectations of family and neighbours, the demands of navigating strange new public and institutional spaces, and adjustments to expectations of the lived-in present and the hoped-for future all resonated with the experience of growing up with Palestinian parents in America. Psychological pieces fell into place or found a fit in this new situated reality of living in a West Bank village. Girls learned to experience their lives in Palestine contrapuntally (Said 1984). Lana summed all of this up for me when she explained:

> [In the US] my parents would always tell me, "You can't do this" and "You can't do that", but I never knew why. They never told us. But now I know why.

One scene: a group of American-Palestinian Friends female students perform a melded routine of Palestinian *dabka* and American jazz dancing for the school's community "open day" in an attempt to represent a single coherent version of their identity. As the music mixes into American rap and the girls shift their movements to the music, their male American-Palestinian principal orders the music to stop and the girls off the stage mid-way through the routine. The girls are angry and resentful, but also react in shame and silence. No further attempts are made to so obviously enact their dual/contradictory cultural understanding of themselves. What they

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Palestine. However, it is accurate to say that all of the girls I spoke to grew up with some cultural sense of being Palestinian in the US and maintain a cultural sense of being American in Palestine.

did in that public forum, moving their bodies in such a sensual way, was *haram* (forbidden), *a'ib* (shameful).

The difficulties American-Palestinian girls encountered in trying to live as American-Palestinians in Palestine contributed to the development of a nostalgic discourse amongst them. These young returnees were diasporic Palestinian-Americans longing for the home they knew in the US, and the fantasy of possibilities that this homeland holds. Dalal cried to me, "I feel like I've missed out on so much [being] here [in Palestine]-- I feel like life is going on somewhere else and I can't have it." This desire was often rooted, or even hidden, in aspirations to return to the US for their university education or in the desire to marry a fellow Palestinian-American.[38] Lana told me gratefully, "I think if I had to spend all my summers here [in Palestine] I would go crazy....It really helps that I go back every summer."

Describing the experience of Japanese-Brazilians who have relocated in Japan and then sometimes return to Brazil, Keiko Yamanaka (1996, 90) detects a "circular diaspora formation" where "migrants circulate between their ancestral and adopted countries, their homelands altering as they do so--often with a generation or more of settled residence between migrations". However, several girls who spoke to me prior to their return to the US as a result of marriage or, as in one case, to pursue a university education, were ambivalent about leaving Palestine, which they had come to regard as their home, if not a homeland in the same sense that it was for their parents. Some were reluctant to leave parents, siblings, and friends behind in Palestine, but others felt more personal anxieties about leaving Palestine for a return to the US. Amal said to me about her tentative plans to return to the US to continue her education, "I hope I'm not just running back to the States.", and Dina had these reflections about life in Palestine and her planned move to the US in the following year:

> Lately, I've become pretty attached to Palestine, and sometimes I even wonder to myself, "What *don't* I like about living here?" But then things will come back to me, like that I'm getting older and I haven't spent the past four years living continuously with my father. Other times things will just hit me in the face, like a slap. Usually it's when political problems arise, and I feel impotent to do anything about it....I have no idea how I'm going to feel about coming back here in the future. I mean for almost four years now, I've been trying to get back to the US, now that I'm most probably going, I'm scared of going.

This Birzeit student expressed many areas of ambivalence and conflict about her "dual-place identity". Ironically, and not surprisingly given her anxiety about leaving Palestine, she found

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[37] These schools are not equipped to teach their students Arabic as a second language or to train them in Arabic sufficiently to manage the grade twelve *tawjihi* exams, the local matriculation exams used to determine university entrance in Palestine and Jordan and also, frequently, suitability for local jobs.
[38] As will be discussed in the following chapters, there are risks involved in making this diasporic sentiment explicit.

herself becoming attached to the country after four years of residence, and after four years of "trying to get back to the US". However, emotionally closer to her father than to her mother, Dina felt her father's absence in her life and wanted to make up for this in the time remaining to her before she gets married ("I'm getting older"). Finally, once back in the US she has "no idea" how she will feel about returning to Palestine to live, probably especially given that the US is her first home, she has struggled to go back there for four years, but improbably in her eyes, she developed an affection for Palestine despite this. Will Dina redevelop a sense of home in the US? Will this prevent her from returning to Palestine even if her mother and siblings remain there? Interwoven in this narrative was the fact of her father's reluctance to allow her to return to the US to study for fear that she would not choose to return to Palestine. He only relented once made aware of the impoverished university education his exceptionally bright daughter was receiving at the best university his homeland had to offer. Most likely, her refusal to commit to stay in the US or to return to Palestine was a tactical one.[39]

Thus, "circular diaspora formation" cannot be taken for granted in the case of American-Palestinian girls with homeland location altering across generations as Yamanaka (1996) suggests.[40] "Homeland" was a concept not so clear-cut and defined for the American-Palestinian girls I spoke to as it was for their parents, who seemed to know where their true home was, thus begging the question of whether these girls will ever locate one site as their "homeland", and if so, where that will be. At this point in their lives, many of them represented themselves in their behaviour and discourses as participants in a Palestinian-American diaspora in Palestine. However, once adults and with more power to choose the location of their household residence, it is difficult to predict how they will define "home" and "homeland" for themselves and their future children.

### What theories of migration and transnationalism leave out

Palestinian migration to the US has been a family history and tradition for many West Bankers this century. Return migration after decades in the US seemed to be the prevalent mode for many men in the pre-WWII era. Even after WWII, but before 1967, many Palestinian men constructed

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[39] The issue of this student's strategically delayed decision to return to Palestine after completing her university education in the US is one that will be examined in more depth in chapter 5.
[40] After all, Yamanaka (1996) is researching Brazilian-Japanese adults who have returned to Japan after spending all of their formative years in Brazil.

parallel lives in the US--working, marrying, and having children, all the while sending money home to their Palestinian wives and children and building homes and saving funds for eventual retirement in their home villages. Their Palestinian sons would sometimes join them or follow their footsteps, sometimes to assume family businesses in the US, then return to Palestine to marry and bring their wives to the US with them. There they built their businesses and families until return to Palestine this decade seemed feasible.

Exile in the US did not sit comfortably with the parents of the girls I knew, and indeed, dreams of return permeated the family life and mythologies of many of them. This generation of Palestinian-Americans differed from ones previous in many respects. First, the men had their Palestinian wives and children with them in the US, in contrast to those earlier migrants who left their Palestinian wives and children in the home village. Second, unlike those earlier migrants who did have wives and children in the US, they did not assimilate, but instead maintained a "Palestinianness" that enabled them to seriously contemplate return once the opportunity to do so emerged. Finally, like many of their fathers and grandfathers, many of fathers of the girls I interviewed maintained their businesses in the US and commuted between the US and Palestine.

However, return to Palestine is not the return to the mythical homeland represented in the tales on which these girls have been brought up. Realities of military occupation, village life, and the material conditions of an underdeveloped country all contradict the diasporic versions/visions in which Palestinian parents coached their daughters. The Oslo Accords, the critical mass of returnees from the US and elsewhere, and the transnational existence that their families live all make the construction of new versions of "Palestinianness" possible in the Palestinian-American diaspora in Palestine.

Yet these new constructions of Palestinian "dual-place identities" are not as uncomplicated and psychologically and socially unproblematic as many writers on this issue would have us believe as a result of their theoretical silences on those questions. While movements of diasporic peoples between places is now relatively commonplace and is widely achievable, given a certain minimum income, negotiating their identities across borders is not so simple or painless or without cost to individuals and their families. This begs important questions of the theoretical literature analyzing migration, transnationalism, and identity.

As George Gmelch (1980, 137-8) and Nancie Gonzalez (1992, 21) have noted, motivations for transnational movement are almost impossible to determine through social science research methods. Return migration itself is rarely touched upon, and when it has been analyzed, issues of gender, identity, and adolescence have been ignored (Rhoades 1979; Gmelch 1980). Sociological approaches focus on the structures of migration, including family networks and

ethnic economic enclaves in host societies (Boyd 1989). More recent and sophisticated attempts to explore migration take this analysis further to examine the construction of transnational "fields" of social relations (Basch, Schiller, Blanc 1994, 27) and identities (Kearney 1991; Rouse 1991). Yet rarely do these writers analyze in micro-detail the dynamics of family relations and identity, and what role these play in migration, identity, and gender relations, including decisions to migrate or to return. While some researchers do address the issues of gender and migration, including changing family dynamics (Mandel 1989a; Eastmond 1993; al-Rasheed 1993), often these works usually only glance at micro-dynamic issues of identity and identity construction at the individual and family level in the new host countries.[41] With the exception of a mention by Ruth Mandel (1990, 161-2), adolescents are almost always absent from these accounts, except as problems that migrant mothers worry about, or as behaviour problems or enigmas of citizenship that schools and other state social institutions in the host country are anxious about and want to study (Aronowitz 1984; Phinney 1990; Rumbaut 1994). Where issues of adolescent first generation identity are addressed, they are within the framework of assimilation and future prospects of socio-economic mobility (Portes, Zhou 1993).

Dynamics of gender, family, and identity play major roles in migratory decisions and construction of transnationalism in the Palestinian-American case, and it is precisely this nexus of issues that is missing in the theoretical literature. In the next chapter I will examine how Palestinian-American girls are both located and situate themselves, racially, ethnically, and nationally in the US and in Palestine. These positions are everywhere intersected by class and gender, and it is on the basis of this analysis that I will then turn to issues of honour, family, and identity in the fourth chapter. Two issues will emerge out of these chapters. First, identity in general and transnational identity in particular, rather than being one core essence, is a slippery, shifting, and fragmented entity, composed of multiple and frequently contradictory identities differently deployed according to context and contingency. Palestinian-American girls take up a variety of American, Palestinian, and Muslim identities in the US and in the West Bank, thus rendering their Palestinian-American identity/ies neither fully "American" nor "Palestinian", but something else that is entirely unique and fitting to their own historical location and experience. Second, unmarried Palestinian-American girls are perceived by their families and their Palestinian communities in the West Bank as vulnerable to "Americanisation" and American influences and dangers while resident in the US. This vulnerability poses a danger to their families' honour and identities as Palestinians, making it necessary to both move them to their home villages in the West Bank and tightly control their movements and comportment once they are there. Image control for the sake of family honour is a large aspect of this regulation, and related to the control of their daughters' (and thus their families') images is the issue of their

[41] Mandel (1990) also examines migrant identity in the home country.

marriageability. Their daughters' identities and their marriageability directly impinge on parents' Palestinian identities and senses of themselves as successful parents, necessitating the girls' subtle and intricate negotiation of identities in the West Bank if they are to fulfil their own visions of themselves as young Palestinian-American women.

## Chapter Three

## Being Palestinian, American, and "Different"

> I have come to understand myself primarily in oppositional contexts: in Jordan I learned the ways in which I am American, while in the United States I discovered the ways in which I am Arab (Majaj 1994, 74)--*a young Palestinian-American woman.*

> Cultural identities are the points of identification, the unstable points of identification or suture, which are made, within the discourses of history and culture. Not an essence but a *positioning* (Hall 1994, 395).

In the previous chapter I discussed the nature of Palestinian migration to the US over the course of this century and examined various writings on migration, diaspora, and transnationalism. In my review of the literature I found that little attention was paid to the impact of migration on the micro-dynamics of identity, leaving the reader with an implicit and underlying assumption that following or accompanying the late 20th century permeability of national borders is the formation of new identities that sprawl across the spaces previously demarcated by politically determined boundaries and perimeters (see especially Kearney 1991 and Rouse 1991). The use of the term "hybridity" is especially problematic in these and other post-colonial writings, with its biological-genetic associations, giving the impression of a seamless melding. The narratives I collected of American-Palestinian girls in the West Bank suggest that people whose lives flow across and between various nation-states do not simply construct new, melded, hyphenated identities. Rather, transnationally situated individuals deploy, sometimes strategically, a variety of identities according to context and contingency. The American-Palestinian girls I spoke to could variously be white middle class suburban Americans, devout Muslims, West Bank village *fallaha*, young western feminists, "headbangers", inner-city gang members or followers, and rap music aficionados. Transnationalism, then, does not so much merge a variety of identities together as it provides subjects with a broader range of markers to deploy in given contexts. This is not to suggest that the construction of new or hybridised identities does not occur. However, a closer look at the identities of those living transnational lives indicates that a multiplicity of identity options informs this hyphenation or hybridisation.

The notion that identities are situationally located, multiple, fragmented, relationally constituted, and sometimes contradictory is not new. Social scientists are now writing about ethnic, racial, and cultural identities as constructed categories that can be strategically deployed, rather than as primordial, unchangeable essences residing at the core of one's being. Implicit in the recognition of these categories as constructed is the notion that these identities are also relational, and that

people variously position themselves, or are positioned, in reference to context, gender, lifecycle, class, and locale. Gender and sex (Butler 1990a; Moore 1994a), ethnicity (Wallman 1983; Hall 1991, 1994; Nagel 1994), and race (Warren, Twine 1997) have all been theorised as identity constructs contingent on and constituted through historical, political, economic, and cultural relations in particular contexts. In this chapter I will discuss the ethnic, national, and racial identities that the American-Palestinian girls I spoke to "played out" in the US and in the West Bank. While it is impossible to avoid the discussion of gender when analyzing ethnicity, nationality, and race, an examination of the gendered identities of the girls will be mostly relegated to the following chapter.

Writers seem to agree that ethnic and racial categories are important features of the nation-state, and serve to mark differing status positions and access to power and resources. They also contrast with "totalizing and homogenizing" nationalist projects in their effects, and can be compared with class, gender, age, and sexual orientation in this regard (Alonso 1994, 391; Anthias, Yuval-Davis 1992; Basch, Schiller, Blanc 1994, 39).

Ethnic categories, while ideological, also involve concrete material practices that serve to "posit" boundaries between those who belong and those who do not (Anthias, Yuval-Davis 1992, 4; Brah 1996, 163). Race,[1] according to Ana Maria Alonso (1994, 391), is a somatic sub-category of ethnicity,[2] while ethnicity "privileges style-of-life indexes of status distinctions such as dress, language, religion, food, music, or occupation." Ethnic categories are varyingly "racialised" to impose different rights to access to social goods. For instance, in their article on "whiteness", Jonathan Warren and France Winddance Twine (1997) explore how Irish Americans were racialised as non-whites in the 19th century US and how Chinese Americans were "whitened" in Mississippi during the early post-WWII era. Together race and ethnicity "are used simultaneously as signifiers of hierarchized categorical identities" (Alonso 1994, 391), articulating race and ethnicity with class as analysed by various scholars studying British and American society (Gans 1979; Gilroy 1987, 28-30; Gonzalez 1989a; Basch, Schiller, Blanc 1994; Twine 1996).[3] Borrowing from Stuart Hall, Paul Gilroy (1987, 30) claims that "'race is the modality in which class is lived', the medium in which it is appropriated and 'fought through.'"

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[1] In much of the literature there is slippage between the notions of "race" and "racism" which I will not address here (Gilroy 1987; Anthias, Yuval-Davis 1992; Werbner, Modood 1997). See Bonnett (1997) and Giroux (1997) for critiques of the recent literature on "whiteness" and its frequent conflation with racism.

[2] However, it should be clarified that although race is described as a somatic sub-category, there is in fact no objective, scientific basis for the grounding of racial categories in biology and genetics (Rose et al. 1984).

[3] However, as Gans (1979) and Twine (1996) make clear, the relationship of race with class does not always fix subjects in the lower or working classes. Twine's (1996) characterization of middle and upper-

Nationalism and race are inextricably linked in discourses of "biology and destiny", where "the limits of 'race' have come to coincide so precisely with national frontiers" (Gilroy 1987, 46). In other words, "To talk about nation, therefore, is to talk about race....the concept of nation is oppositional and hierarchical, the nation stands in opposition to those defined as biologically different only by envisioning nation as composed of those who are biologically similar" (Basch, Schiller, and Blanc 1994, 37). Alonso (1994, 392), too, demonstrates the ideological implications embedded in the eliding of ethnicity and race:

> The false precept...is that ethnic groups are genetically pure breeding populations with distinct, homogeneous, and bounded cultures. Ethnicity is thus rendered primordial and ethnic groups become viewed as superorganisms characterized by unique repertoires of cultural traits that can be transmitted, borrowed, or lost.

These articulations of nation, race, and ethnicity lead us back to the "isomorphism of space, place, and culture" that Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson (1992) work to problematise. The term "ethnic", as used in the US mostly to denote non-white immigrant groups, is a means of maintaining the exact correspondence of culture and locale, and by implication, race (Basch, Schiller, Blanc 1994, 43).[4]

As implied by the use of ethnicity and race to construct hierarchies of power and access to goods and resources within a state formation, those belonging to "other" races and ethnicities, often formed as diasporic groups, serve a valuable purpose as counterpoints against which the dominant social group defines itself:

> Internal social unity has on some occasions *required* that minorities be kept as diasporas. Thus the persistence of the Jewish diaspora was for generations a convenient and even necessary element of Christian theology: the "wandering Jew" provided daily proof of the superiority of the Christian faith, on which Western societies were based....Palestinians are often stigmatized collectively as terrorists par excellence (Safran 1991, 92).

It is in this experience of "difference" that migrant groups often seem to emphasise their ethnicity in ways possibly never practised in their homelands in a bid to "bind them together, perhaps in new ways, and to shield them from an often hostile receiving society" (Gonzalez 1989a, 4). Nonetheless, migrants also attempt to position themselves in ways more favourable in the host country. For instance, Caribbean migrants to the US work to distinguish themselves from black/African-Americans and Puerto Ricans in order to situate themselves in hierarchical positions above those occupied by either of these American race groups (Sutton 1992; Basch,

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middle class "black" girls resident in US suburbs as "white" seems to bear this out. I will develop this issue later on in the chapter.

Schiller, Blanc 1994). The Mississippi Chinese, earlier referred to, "'prove[d]' their non-Blackness by cutting off all of their social ties with Blacks, invoking racist representations of Blacks, and culturally imitat[ed] the White community" (Warren, Twine 1997, 209). The Turkish Alevi community in Germany distinguish themselves from their Sunni compatriots and emphasise their similarities to Germans (Mandel 1989a, 1989b). The Iraqi Assyrian community in London emphasises their Christian similarity to the English in order to contrast themselves to Muslim Iraqi migrants (al-Rasheed 1994).

However, these attempts at taking up "American", "German", or "English" subject positions are often incomplete, while their "Caribbeanness", their "Chineseness", their "Turkishness", and their "Iraqiness" is also compromised. Frequently, the result is the development of an entirely new identity that is not completely "grounded" in either place, but rather, alternately in both (Mandel 1989b). Here Ruth Mandel (1990, 167) describes the process as it is demonstrated by Turkish migrants in Germany:

> A vicious circle of sorts reflects the migratory cycle itself and eventually results in a situation in which the centre finds itself wherever the migrant is not, be it Turkey or Germany. No given locus can be the totalising centre for long. The migrant's marginality in both Turkey and Germany precludes his or her full identification with either place. This displacement is exacerbated by the fact that in either place migrants partially define themselves in relation to the values and symbols of the other locale, which are ubiquitous even in its absence.

Palestinian migrants to the US (and their progeny who are "returned" to the West Bank), too, are caught in this cycle. But Palestinians are also situated in an additional dynamic. As a consequence of their national tragedy being played and re-played on the international stage, their claim to their own culture is interrupted by the gaze and claim of others.[5]

> For Palestinian culture, the odd thing is that its own identity is more frequently than not perceived as "other". "Palestine" is so charged with significance for others that Palestinians cannot perceive it as intimately theirs without a simultaneous sense of its urgent importance for others as well. "Ours" but not yet fully "ours"....Thus the insider becomes the outsider....Today the Palestinian genius expresses itself in crossings-over, in clearing hurdles, activities that do not lessen the alienation, discontinuity, and dispossession, but that dramatize and clarify them instead (Said 1986, 40-1).

Finally, the ability to fluidly negotiate identities may also be dependent on locale. The US is a big country, and its urban populations frequently number in the millions. Conversely, in the West Bank there are scarcely one and a half million Palestinians. This difference in the

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[4] Abu-Lughod (1991) advocates the "ethnography of the particular" as a mode of "writing against culture". Abu-Lughod convincingly argues that "culture" has replaced "race" as a concept that generalises and "others" those we write about.

[5] Note the similarity to "the male gaze", first expounded by Berger (1972), to explain how women view themselves with a "third eye" outside of themselves.

population scale to some extent determines the ability to be anonymous in varying social situations. This factor, coupled with the varying levels of social and psychological determinism with which ethnic, religious, class, and national identities are viewed in the US and Palestine, affect how "optional" identities really are in both locales. For instance, Suad Joseph (1988, 28-9) recalls her first experiences as an American-Lebanese living in Lebanon and contrasts her sense of identity there with her identity in the US:

> In America...identities were optional....My "white-skin" privilege allowed me to identify with the Arab-American community or "pass" as a white American....there was some apparent choice concerning identities.
>
> In Lebanon, identities did not seem as optional....All of these categories [religious, gender, locale, family, class] gave me an a priori definition in the eyes of others apart from the meaning they held for me....That I could be judged on the basis of my religion, family, ethnic membership, or any other category boggled my imagination.

In the previous chapter I discussed how the Palestinian-American girls I spoke to were situated transnationally. However, I suggested that transnational or "dual-place" identities are not new hybrid entities where the identities of both places are melded together. Nor are such identities based on the papering over of bi-polar identities (e.g. being "American" and being "Palestinian" at the same time). In this chapter I will discuss how these girls' identities as Palestinians and as Americans are constructed on the basis of class positioning and racial and ethnic categorisation, as well as on their uptake of particular behaviours and representations designed to portray or obscure various identity positions. We will see that Palestinian-American girls take up a number of different representations in the US and in Palestine, practice "situational ethnicity" (Gonzalez 1989a, 4), and that underneath the veneer of transnational/"dual-place" identities are a collection of varying and sometimes contradictory possibilities.

## Being American as a Palestinian girl in the US

Despite the fact that the girls I spoke to reported feeling that being Muslim or Palestinian or Arab was "normal" for them in the US, they also commonly reported feeling "different". Most respondents reported to Louise Cainkar (1991) that they grew up from an early age with a sense of difference from other children. This difference had to do with their families, rather than with affiliations with their peers.

Many of Cainkar's respondents reported feeling discontent and resentment over the restrictions placed on them, especially when in childhood there was no hint that they were to live a different lifestyle from their non-Palestinian American counterparts and they were free to incorporate "American" values and to feel "American" (1991, 287-89):

> Their childhood had allowed them to fit into American society and assimilate many of its values. Feeling as though they were like other American children, and many times being pushed to prove it, they were distressed by the change to a new set of criteria [encountered in puberty] (Cainkar 1991, 288).

However, many of the girls I spoke to reported always knowing they were "different". From early childhood Aisha had a sense that "[t]hey [her peers] never saw a difference with me, but I saw a difference with myself....I knew I was different....they were American and I was Palestinian." "Also," said Aisha, "my name was different." Aisha felt that much of this difference was based on the restrictions on her activities. When I asked Linda if it was isolating for her to be the only Arab in her immediate community she replied, "I wasn't isolated but I knew what I was." And Khadija said, "In America you feel like you're Arab."

This "difference" was to some extent constructed through the girls' families' use of Arabic, celebration of Muslim holidays, attendance at a mosque, and even participation in political activities. Difference was also, as we will see in the next chapter, built and reinforced through the girls' practice of a variety of social restrictions based on notions of family honour.

While parents want their children to speak Arabic, many only grow up with spotty knowledge of the language, largely because the parents and relatives themselves have adopted English as a primary language. Children of later immigrants often fare much better in this regard as Arabic remains the language of the home. Some of the families Cainkar had contact with had sent their children back to Palestine to immerse them in the Arabic language and Palestinian culture (Cainkar 1994, 93, 98).

Yet the issue of language and culture acquisition is not unproblematic. While four of the girls I spoke to were comfortable speaking Arabic and felt that it truly was a second language, for most of the others speaking Arabic was an uncomfortable task, and one tinged with familial and community expectations.[6] Many of the girls reported that they spoke Arabic at home before they went to kindergarten. However, with attendance in the American public school system and consumption of English-language American television programs they quickly became more fluent in English than in Arabic. Over time, many of them began to lose the fluency they once had in their pre-school days. Three of the girls recalled that although their parents would speak Arabic to them at home, they would always reply in English. Lana said that she and her siblings "hated" speaking Arabic, feeling at a disadvantage in the language especially if in an argument with her parents. Cindy and Nancy associated pressure to speak Arabic at home with their fathers, with Nancy saying that her and her siblings' insistence on replying to him in English would "drive him crazy", echoing and reversing perhaps, the experience of disadvantage

described by Lana. However, two of the other girls reported that their fathers would speak to them in English. This reverberates with another Palestinian-American daughter's experience:

> Though I learned "kitchen Arabic" quite early, and could speak with my grandmother on an elementary level, I never became proficient in the language that should have been mine from childhood....My father's habit of speaking only English at home played a large part in this deficiency; it seems never to have occurred to him that my sister and I would *not* pick up Arabic. Perhaps he thought that language skills ran in the blood (Majaj 1994, 73).

Similarly, Lisa Majaj's (1994, 74) father "seemed to believe that knowledge of Palestinian history was a blood inheritance". Three teachers who had instructed the grade eleven Palestinian History class for "English-speakers" at the Friends School during different years told me that their students barely had a grasp of the most basic facts of their national historical past. Even national and religious holidays and customs can be ignored in the diaspora. Alia painfully recalled how her family never observed Ramadan or the various Muslim *a'yad* (holidays), and how she felt that this undermined the Muslim Palestinian identity she was working at crafting in the US. Instead, she would celebrate the holidays by distributing candy to her (non-Arab non-Muslim) friends at school, and her boyfriend would skip his lunch at school to sit with her during Ramadan. She would give her best friend an *e'id* (holiday) gift at the end of Ramadan, just as her friend would always have a gift for Alia under the Christmas tree. Aisha, on the other hand, warmly recalls fond memories of family Ramadan observance in the US where she fasted from the age of seven. She remembers how her father would come home early from work during the month of fasting to gather all of his children around him and read them stories from the Qur'an. Lana also remembers that her family celebrated Ramadan in the US. But it meant little to her and her siblings, who would secretly break the fast out of their parents' sight.

Several of the girls reported activity in the local mosque or an Arab- or Palestinian-American community centre. Many of these girls attended religion and Arabic classes offered by these institutions. Laila remembers these classes in her US city, where there was much discussion about dating and sexuality, and contrasted their approach to the one she was exposed to at her high school in Palestine. She says that in the US she was taught "the religion, not tradition" and valued the approach of inviting participants to discuss their everyday problems and to find solutions to them in the teachings of Islam, which was presented as a useful and practical ethical guide to living. Nancy, however, along with her siblings, hated going to the mosque and always saw it as a "punishment" where she and her mother and sisters were "stuck in a room with all of the women" where they had to eat *mansaf* and other Arabic food, "which we hated".

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[6] This will be discussed in greater detail later in the chapter.

For some of the girls it was the political, social, and cultural, rather than the linguistic and religious, aspects of being Palestinian that their parents emphasised. Laila's parents, contrary to Palestinian tradition where all children are given their father's name as their second name, gave all four of their children the second name "Palestine". Amal said, "For me, being 'Palestinian' [in the US] was about *dabka*, embroidery, brasswork, and politics and nationalism--a lot of politics and nationalism [laughing]". Finally, Dina said, "My parents drilled it [Palestinian identity] into my head." She remembered the outbreak of the *intifada* when she was in grade 4 and being taken to political demonstrations in her US city with her father. Big festive weddings in the community were rare in those days, imitating the restraint Palestinians were exercising in the West Bank and Gaza. However, at every wedding the halls were decorated with flags and Palestinian colours, and they were celebrated with political songs and speeches--again reminiscent of wedding parties in the occupied Palestinian territories.[7] There was always a moment of silence to think about their brothers and sisters and martyrs in Palestine. Dina recalled the surge of pride she would feel at demonstrations and other Palestinian nationalist events in the US.

This difference based on "Arabness" or "Palestinianness" or being "Muslim" comes not only from a choice willingly made, but can also be experienced as a stance thrust upon Palestinians as a result of their dispossession as a people. As one Palestinian woman explains:

> I feel that I don't want to identify in any other way [but as a Palestinian]. But maybe if I was a full-blooded Jordanian, I might not feel this way, because I would have it [a state and an identity] and take it for granted. But when I don't have it, it's something missing in my life. I feel I cannot identify with any other part of the world until I get my full identity first as a Palestinian. Then I would say, "Okay, I'm an American." Because the other identity would be there, clear, settled within me, and I'm satisfied with it (Christison 1989, 26-7).

This impulse is sometimes then imposed on children of Palestinian parents in the US. For instance, Dina told me, "It wasn't good to say to my parents, 'I'm American'--I called myself 'Palestinian' in America." Another Palestinian-American daughter recounts her father's reaction to her "Americanness":

> While my father shared my anger at being marginalized in the American community, he did not appreciate my attempts to reject his heritage. Despite his esteem for certain aspects of American culture [e.g., small-town culture, technology, work ethic]...as I grew

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[7] During my fieldwork in 1993 I attended a groom's family's wedding party in a Gazan refugee camp. The groom was a Fatah activist and the party was held outdoors in a building site in the camp. We all had to be prepared to flee if the Israeli military encountered the gathering. I was struck by the political speeches given in honour of the groom in celebration of his marriage the next day, as well as by the Palestinian flags and huge posters of Arafat and Abu Jihad hanging on either side of the makeshift stage where the speeches and *dabka* were performed. It was clear that at that time during the *intifada* political sentiment was enmeshed in every aspect of Palestinian life in the occupied territories, not the least of which included marriage.

> older he grew ever more disapproving of my efforts to identify as an American. Although he had left much of my sister's and my own upbringing to my [American] mother, he had assumed that we would arrive at adolescence as model Arab girls: when we did not he was puzzled and annoyed (Majaj 1994, 77).

Difference was experienced both positively and negatively by the girls. Dina reported that although her parents prepared her for possible discrimination in the US, arming her with pride in being Palestinian, she said that she never experienced harassment or prejudice. "I liked being different," she said, and this difference was felt through her Arab name, her parents who both had accents, her mother who wore a *mandil* (headscarf), their religion, and a prohibition on dating. Dina believes that her Palestinianness in the US contributed to her heightened knowledge of geography and Middle Eastern politics, two attributes through which she derived much academic pride. This pride enabled her to take a stance in favour of Iraq and against American intervention during the Gulf War: "I was for Iraq....I'm always for the underdog." Likewise, Nadia told me, "I was very proud [of being Palestinian]....Everyone [in school and the neighbourhood] knew where we came from." I asked how it was during the Gulf War, and Nadia responded: "We were all Muslims, and when one is hurting we all hurt." For Nadia, being an Arab and a Muslim was "normal". She says that her friends were intrigued, and were always wanting to know about how it was to be Arab and Muslim: "They were always excited, interested." It was especially easy to feel proud of a Palestinian identity before the Gulf War, when American television news programs often gave sympathetic coverage of the *intifada.* The impact of this was to instil pride amongst the first generation. As one father said of his five children, "[They are] more Palestinian than I am" (Christison 1989, 33). Another explained about his twelve year old,

> There isn't that reason [terrorism] for my daughter or for other Palestinian daughters to shy away from the fact that they are Palestinians. My daughter doesn't mind at all. She brags about it (Christison 1989, 34).

Nonetheless, some girls did not derive comfort at all from this valorised Palestinian identity. Instead, they were frightened and bewildered by it. For instance, when Aisha was six she visited her parents' Palestinian village and loved it. In her child's eyes everything was wonderful, everyone was nice, and she could play with friends. She said of those days:

> I loved it here. All my family were here. It had been a fun trip. I was a child, and very ignorant.

However, later in the US when she became aware of the *intifada,* she was afraid that the struggle was as bad as the war in Beirut, with newsreel pictures running through her head whenever she thought of it.

Sara's father would bring videos of the *intifada* home for the family to watch, but Sara was too young to really understand: "It was like watching some kind of scary movie and it would make you cry." She said that she never really connected what she saw on those videos with herself and her family.

However, while a valorised political identity might be a source of pride or of fear, other cultural representations are not as flattering to children and teenagers just trying to "fit in". In some cases girls are "embarrassed to bring their friends home, for fear that...differences might arouse undue attention" (Cainkar 1991, 284). Cindy explained to me that she did not want her mother to attend an open day at her school, where she was already teased about being Arab, because her mother wore a *mandil.* Cindy assured me that she "wasn't embarrassed of my mother, I just didn't want anyone to talk about her." Nancy said that sometimes their parents' broken English and praying embarrassed her and her siblings, "especially around new friends who didn't know us."

In US high schools many Arab-American girls have had to deal with ethnic "jokes" and slurs (Cainkar 1991, 285; Daoud 1989). In a recent video documentary entitled *"Benaat* Chicago"[8] adolescent Arab-American girls in Chicago report being called "A-rab", "camel jockey", and "sand nigger".[9] Riham told me that her father always encouraged her and her siblings to be strong ("Don't let anyone call you anything"). Riham was always bigger than the other children in her neighbourhood and wasn't above punching bullies. She looked after herself and other children who were "underdogs" in the neighbourhood, and said that she was always proud and confident in being Arab and Muslim. However, several of the girls told me that they had never encountered any harassment or discrimination on the basis of being Arab or Muslim.

When one girl in the video began to wear the headscarf on the streets of Chicago she experienced overt acts of discrimination (American Friends Service Committee 1996). Several of the girls I spoke to also encountered abuse or ridicule of covered family members. Cindy related one experience in this regard:

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[8] This documentary is based on interviews with teenage girls active in an Arab-American community centre in Chicago's south-side. These are children from lower-middle and upper-lower immigrant families whose parents were part of the most recent, post-1967 wave of emigration from the Middle East to the US. The film met with criticism from two distinct groups of Arab-Americans, and for different reasons according to each group. Upper-middle class and earlier-wave immigrant Arab-Americans disliked the film because they thought that it perpetuated stereotypes about the treatment of Arab women and Arab family life. Parents of inner-city Arab-American children (such as those represented in the film), also disliked the film, but because they felt that the community's problems should be kept within the community and not aired for the general American audience to view and evaluate (Interview with Siham Rashid Odeh, Beit Hanina, 10 October 1997).

[9] While many of the girls in the video spoke resentfully of the negative stereotypes in the US of Arab women as submissive or seductive, none of the girls I spoke to touched on this.

> There was this time when we [her mother, her older brother, and herself] were going to the post office, and there was this lady on the way and she was wearing a bikini bathing suit top, and my mom, she was wearing the *mandil* and the *jilbab*, and we just looked at her, you know, it was nothing. And she started saying bad things to us....she started to say, "At least I'm not like you, wrapping myself all up"....and she started to use bad words to us....we were just shocked. We didn't want to make any problems, just go.

Khadija and Ally both had aunts who covered in the US and who continually encountered stares or ridicule in public spaces such as shopping malls.

The headscarf, of course, is a definitive marker of Muslim, if not Arab, identity: "Without the scarf they ["Americans"] mistake us for Greek or Italian" (American Friends Service Committee 1996). This invisibility in the US is an experience that was frequently noted by the girls to whom I spoke. For instance, Khadija recounted, "People didn't know what we were: we weren't black, we weren't Spanish, we weren't white....We were 'other' [here she motioned as if checking off a box in a questionnaire asking about ethnicity]."

Dina told a story that perfectly captures many of the nuances of being "invisible" as a Palestinian in the US. When she was in first grade her teacher asked her what she "was". Dina replied, "Arabian",[10] to which her teacher suggested that Dina and her parents must be from Saudi Arabia. When Dina tried to explain that her parents were from Palestine her teacher replied that this was impossible because Pakistanis are not Arabs. Dina went home and told her mother the story. Her mother suggested that she try telling the teacher that they were from "Israel". The next day Dina relayed this information to her teacher, and finally the teacher felt she understood. "Oooh, you must be Jewish," she said.

Identity confusions persisted throughout Dina's school life. When she was in grade eight a male classmate asked her what she "was": "Black?" "[Black/white] mixed?" "Indian?" "Italian?" he continued to guess every possibility until he came to "Egyptian?" to which Dina answered, "No, but you're close--one country off." Finally, after guessing everything but "Palestinian", he had to give up and ask her where her parents were from.

Dina's stories in particular demonstrate the paradox in which many Palestinian-American girls (especially those with dark hair and skin) exist in the US. They are visible, marked by colour, and at the same time ethnically, nationally, and racially ambiguous or invisible. For instance, as raised by Dina's first story, the American elision of "Palestinian" and "Pakistani" seems to be common enough for one informant to joke with me about being "Pakestinian" in the US. However, invisibility is not just an imposed position, but can also be tactical, particularly given

[10] I will discuss the use of the term "Arabian" and its function of eluding precise ethnic or national categorisation later in this chapter.

the negative associations with Arab, Muslim, and especially Palestinian identity in the US. These have caused some Muslim Arab-American girls to present their identity in ways more acceptable (in their eyes) to other Americans. In more extreme cases girls obscure their Muslim Arab identities altogether. In "*Benaat* Chicago" some girls expressed embarrassed reluctance to speak Arabic at school because it would definitively mark them as Arabs. All of the girls interviewed referred to themselves as "Arabian" rather than the more conventional "Arab" in a self-confessed effort to avoid being associated with the usual Arab stereotypes. Finally, one of the girls in the documentary tells the story of another girl, "Suha", who used to identify herself as Puerto Rican or black (although both of her parents were fully Arab) in an effort to keep her ethnic identity a secret (American Friends Service Committee 1996).

Although only one of the girls I spoke to reported concealing her identity (and this under pressure from her father, see below), several knew of girls who did, or reported feeling embarrassed about being Muslim, Arab, or Palestinian. Aisha recalled that the only other Arab Muslim girl in her elementary school tried to hide the fact that she was Muslim, andNancy told me:

> It's kind of sad, but we denied our heritage. We were ashamed of what we were [in the context of Palestinian/Muslim="terrorist"]....[But], We didn't hide what we were....If anyone asked what we were we'd say "Arabic".

The girls claimed varying identities in the US, and sometimes more than one. These are some examples of the variations: while Lana defined herself as "Palestinian" in the US, when she was younger she used to say, "My parents are from Israel"; Khadija said that she defined herself as "Arabic", but sometimes she would indicate that she was a "Muslim"; Sara also defined herself as "Muslim"; Ally defined herself as "Arabic", but often people would assume that she was "Spanish"; Nadia chose to define herself as "Muslim", while her parents used "Arab"; Cindy called herself "Arabic-Muslim"; and we have already seen that Dina called herself "Arabian". One study highlights a generational difference when it comes to self-identification in North America. Only 11% of adult Arab Muslim immigrants to North America are willing to identify themselves as "Arab first" in non-Muslim American society, none were willing to identify themselves as "Muslim first", and the vast majority identified themselves as "American". In contrast, 55% of their children identified themselves as Muslims among non-Muslims (Barazangi 1991, 138, 141).

The girls' willingness to use "Muslim" can be understood in the context of the current popularity in the US of black/African-American "ghetto culture"[11] as epitomised by hip hop, and particularly rap, music. Rap music emerged from the Bronx in New York City in the mid-1970s,

[11] My use of the term black/African-American "ghetto culture" does not mean to suggest that "ghetto culture" is strictly associated with being black/African-American or that all black/African-American culture

but only attained a wide-spread popularity in the 1980s (Irving 1993). Rap music lyrics centre around the experience of growing up black in big inner-city ghettos; it is largely a masculinist/misogynist, masculinising, and heterosexist discourse (particularly the "gangsta" strain), openly confronts white oppression and offers a clear critique of authority, borrows on the image of Malcolm X most recently popularised by Spike Lee's movie of the same name, and is influenced by the teachings of Louis Farrakhan, leader of the Nation of Islam (Lusane 1993; Ransby, Matthews 1993; Irving 1993; Allinson 1994; Boyd 1994).[12] Rap is big business in the US, generating hundreds of millions of dollars worth of revenue a year, and popular industry wisdom maintains, and computerised sales systems that delineate customer demography demonstrate, that all of those sales are not limited to black listeners (Samuels 1991; Lusane 1993, 43-44; Allinson 1994; Rodriguez 1994; White 1997). Rap commands a following in the white suburbs, and many commentators speak about its appeal across racial, ethnic, and even national boundaries (Irving 1993; Allinson 1994; Rodriguez 1994; White 1997).[13] Rap's possible appeal to Palestinian-Americans is explained by Irving (1993, 113) who claims that

> rap appears to construct an equivalence between the positions of ethnic groups marginal to the dominant culture on the basis of their shared desire for self-determination and their contestation of their relegation to anonymity within white mainstream culture.

A more superficial explanation for rap's appeal to white audiences is offered by Ewan Allinson (1994, 449), who claims that "it appeals to a long-established romaniticization of the Black urban male as a temple of authentic cool, at home with risk, with sex, with struggle."

However, the Afrocentric nationalist discourse prominent in rap lyrics and symbolism might also resonate with Palestinian-American listeners. Afrocentric rap claims that the African-American cultural heritage is rooted in ancient Egypt, uses the Nile, pyramid, and Sphinx images, and associates itself with the Nation of Islam which claims that African-Americans were originally from Mecca and that African-Americans must reclaim their original Arabic language and their original Muslim religion (Decker 1994). This cultural and religious heritage, which nationalist black/African-Americans claim as their own, is regarded by Muslim Arab- and Palestinian-Americans as part and parcel of their own heritage as Middle Easterners. Moreover, the call to return to roots and to reclaim heritage is common discourse in Palestinian-American teenagers' homes, where parents yearn for the idyllic way of life they conjure in their memories about the

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is characterized by the ghetto. In this instance I am referring to a fragment of subculture that is associated with black/African-Americans living in the inner city evoked by rap lyrics and images.

[12] Allinson (1994), Boyd (1994), Irving (1993), Lusane (1993), and Ransby and Matthews (1993) point to progressive strains of rap lyrics, while also discussing the regressive aspects of the music and its discourse.

[13] Irving (1993, 114) argues that rap "[builds an equivalence] between white males and black males through the denigration of 'woman.'" Further to this, bell hooks (1990, 18) argues: "it should be obvious that moves highlighting black male oppression of females while downplaying white racist oppression of black people would be more marketable than the reverse."

homeland of the past. A shared experience of suffering and resistance can transcend history (Gilroy 1987, 158) and cultural communities to create solidarity and identification on the basis of "ontologically comparable" racism (Werbner 1997, 237-8) and ethnicism. In this respect, the anger and racism that some black/African-Americans, including Nation of Islam leader Farrakhan, harbour toward American Jews (Lester 1995; Gates 1996) might also resonate with Palestinian-American complaints and grievances over Israeli dominance of the West Bank. Indeed, in the immediate aftermath of the 1991 black riots in Crown Heights, where a Hasidic Jew accidentally hit and killed a black child, a poster was displayed portraying a black youth smashing a police car windshield with a caption that called for "The Heroes of [the] Crown Heights Rebellion" to remember Soweto and Palestine (Rieder 1991, 29).

But first and foremost, in the teenage American context rap, and buying into the rap image, is "cool", and the girls' willingness to claim a Muslim identity in the US within this framework becomes understandable. While being "Arab" means locating oneself in a demonised racial/ethnic category in the US, being "Muslim" is also one way of being American, albeit subversively and through participation in a sub-culture. One former teacher reports that her American-Palestinian students in the West Bank would tell her, "We are Muslim, not Arab" (Baker 1998, 4). However, this is also correlated with class and context. For instance, Nancy lived in a small, mostly "white", town where her family lived in an upper-middle class neighbourhood. Already identified with white (or) American culture, she gained no advantage by claiming a Muslim identity, but only compromised her white position by doing so. Thus, identifying with a subculture, in this case black/African-American ghetto culture, is also an expression of refusal of the dominant culture (Hebdige 1979, Back 1996, 134*ff.*). This makes sense in the face of the cultural exclusion that some of the girls experienced in the US, and can also be read as participation in "American" culture at the same time. The girls' willingness to use "Muslim" also stands in contrast to their parents, who reportedly mostly preferred "Arab". Of course their parents, not participating in the black/African-American ghetto sub-culture, would be subject to the conventional white American notions of what being a Muslim means.[14] Several of the girls who began covering in the West Bank or were struggling with the decision to do so, said that their parents would never have allowed them to wear the *mandil* in the US for fear of its conspicuous display of their and their family's Muslim identity.

Yet subcultural groups associated with blacks or with Islam were not the only American identity choices open to the girls. Laila and Riham, both who grew up in upper-middle class white suburbs, associated with the "headbangers". To be a "headbanger" is to identify with the subculture that defines itself around "heavy metal" (a strain of hard rock music). Heavy metal

appeals to an almost exclusively white middle class suburban (spanning lower-middle, working, and professional classes) audience in the US (Walser 1993, 16-18). They characteristically dress in a post-punk style: mostly wearing black, multiply pierced ears as well as pierced noses, concert t-shirts, and "combat boots." Girls' hair can be long or shaven, or a combination. Dramatic, Goth-influenced makeup (white face powder, dark eyeliner, and red lipstick), is also commonly worn.

Laila's mother put a lot of pressure on her in the US to socialise with other Arab-American girls. But according to Laila, all of the other Arab-Americans in her school were "computer geeks", with whom she did not want to be associated. At her school (or perhaps, in her group at school) she was an oddity because of her religion and culture. The headbanger crowd included, but was not restricted to, kids from "white trash", Chinese, Italian, or mixed ethnic backgrounds, and some, also, were from broken or troubled homes. Laila was accepted by this group. There were no more stupid questions about her "ethnic" name or her unfashionable clothes that she had received from more mainstream white classmates. Also, "My parents gave me limited freedom", so being with the headbangers was her emancipation.

I asked Laila how being a headbanger connected to her beliefs in Islam. She had no hesitation about responding with, "death metal music", and explained that its death and judgement day themes were consistent with a fatalist interpretation of Islam: "It doesn't matter what you do in this life because we're all going to die anyhow." Indeed, Robert Walser (1993, 157-8) claims that "thrash bands very often address violence, death, and madness in their lyrics....thrash metal [is] darker than other metal--angrier, more critical and apocalyptic....If their imagery is horrible, it is intended--and understood by fans--as an honest reflection and critique of a brutal world" (also see Breen 1991). In short, like Islam, heavy metal lyrics provide a moral critique of social and material conditions by "engag[ing] with social and metaphysical depth in a world of commodities and mass communication" (Walser 1993, 159). Laila shared an adherence to American, or American-influenced, versions of Islam with other Palestinian-American teenagers who were "into" rap music and black/African-American culture.

Laila explained to me that her parents had always emphasized to her, "It's good to be different", presumably in an effort to support her in claiming her "Palestinianness" in their American context. But, Laila said, this approach "backfired" on her parents as it produced in her a creative and critical thinker, as expressed in her rebellion and her clothes, and in her total headbanger "style". Laila claimed that she negotiated her "difference", both from her upper-middle class white neighbourhood and classmates, and from her Palestinian parents, and made it her own by becoming

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[14] The parents' self-positioning must also be understood within their context as shop-owners, often in US

a headbanger. In short, like rap music and black/African-American ghetto culture, being a headbanger is a way of refusing mainstream American culture. Although it is a subculture mostly dominated by suburban whites, because of its marginality and its popular association with the working and lower-middle classes in the American "rust-belt" (Walser 1993, 16), it is not quite white, but is "off-white" instead (Squire 1997). Most importantly here, similar to rap culture, heavy metal allowed Laila and Riham to retain a notion of being Muslim (although, unlike rap, there are no direct associations between Islam and heavy metal) while providing a space to be "American" in the US where they are frequently denied unquestioned or easy access (by their peers, their parents, or both) to mainstream white American culture.

Also of interest here are informants' reports of American-Palestinian teenagers referring to themselves as "A-rabs"--a derogatory term that the teenagers report is often used in reference to themselves in the US. Adult informants claim that when they have challenged the teenagers about their own self-referential use of the term, they say, "That's what they [Americans] call us, so we call ourselves that too." The self-referential use of "nigga"[15] is commonly seen in rap and gang discourses:

> Nigga has often been the calling card of rappers who consider themselves products and practitioners of the ghetto life. The "hardest" and often the most confrontational rappers have defined themselves as niggas in opposition to the dominant society (Boyd 1994, 300).

Here, then, is a more confrontational self-definition. Being an "A-rab", rather than being Muslim or "off-white", does not even make an attempt to invisibly "fit in" with the rap or heavy metal "mainstream", but instead imitates the mode of "hard" that "niggas" practice on the margins, or perhaps outside, of mainstream American society. In this way it inserts Palestinian-Americans into an American style of being. Its use in Palestine self-differentiates them from local Palestinians, who are "Arabs", not "A-rabs". Nonetheless, the use of "A-rab" depends on context, and its meaning is variable and contingent. For instance, as I will discuss below, American-Palestinians also use the term to refer to local Palestinians in a derogatory fashion, similar to how it is used by non-Arabs in the US to refer to Arab-Americans. In sum, the meaning of the term "A-rab", like "nigga" depends on the user and to whom it is used to refer, as well as on context. When one American-Palestinian calls another American-Palestinian "A-rab" its meaning can be entirely different from when an American-Palestinian calls a local Palestinian by the same name.

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inner cities. This will be discussed later in the chapter.

[15] Also see Smitherman (1997) for a discussion of the use of "nigga" and its social rather than racial meanings.

The use of "Arabic" as an identity label by many of the girls also deserves closer scrutiny. While it may only indicate ungrammatical English usage, I believe that in many ways it performs the same function as "Arabian". "Arabic", an adjective equivalent to "Canadian" or "Arabian", is distinct from "Arab", a noun denoting ethnicity/race and equivalent to "white" or "black". When one uses "Arabic" there is no one country to associate it with, as with "Canada", and more often is properly used as a descriptive of linguistic category.[16] "Arabic" eludes ethnic categorisation as well, unlike the use of "Arab". In this way we can see that "Arabic" avoids both national and ethnic/racial identification, thus maintaining an ambiguous identity category.

The motivation to obfuscate Palestinian identity in the US becomes clear when the socio-political context is considered. In the US, ethnic derogation of Palestinians and Arabs takes the form of exclusion in the American political arena, derogatory imagery and portrayals in the popular media, and surveillance and arrests during times of political tension. Terrorist acts such as assassinations, arson, vandalism, threats, and harassment are also committed against Arab individuals, activists and academics, and institutions and organizations, by individuals, and sometimes groups, motivated by their own political agendas and self-interest, and by racism, xenophobia, and jingoism (Morsy 1986; Samhan 1987; Abraham 1994; Stockton 1994). Indeed, it could be argued that "Palestinian-American" and "Arab-American" are oxymorons. In the words of one researcher, the "negative media portrayals of Islam....creates almost a state of siege [amongst Muslim immigrants and their descendants in North America]" (Abu-Laban 1991, 27).

US foreign policy that favours Israel and disadvantages Palestinians is certainly a factor that adds to Arab- and Palestinian-Americans' sense of exclusion and marginalisation from the American mainstream:

> to be an Arab American is to live a double life. Here are loyal American citizens paying taxes which buy weapons for Israel that kill their own relatives....The paradox is painful and, even for the most dutiful Arab American, hard to escape (Orfalea 1981, 8-9).

American foreign policy has obvious implications for Palestinian-American identity:

> Their identity as Palestinian-Americans has become entrenched, but they note that they cannot consider themselves full Americans as long as U.S. policy prevents the possibility of their return and encourages the destruction of their homeland (Cainkar 1994, 96).

During the Gulf War women had their head-scarves pulled off and were called "greasy Arabs". Any act of domestic terrorism, or events which are linked to terrorism, whether or not they have anything to do with Arab activity or affairs, stirs up fears. For instance, in the aftermath of the Oklahoma City bombing in 1995 and the accidental explosion of TWA flight 800 in 1996 (both

[16] Although, of course, language and nation are closely associated.

events entirely unassociated with Arabs or Muslims in fact, except, possibly as fellow American victims) Arab-American teenagers in Chicago were frightened and anxious about possible bomb threats or vandalism directed at their community centre in the wake of immediate accusations of Arab or Muslim terrorism as explanations for both tragedies (American Friends Service Committee 1996).

Several of the girls I spoke to also reported political harassment from schoolmates, teachers, neighbours, and strangers during heightened tensions or war in the Middle East. Amal was disturbed by the 1982 Lebanese war. Her family received harassing telephone calls during this time, and she also had nightmares as a result of viewing the images on television news. During the Gulf War Linda was in grade eight. She said of this time, "Even the teachers were acting weird with me....I hated grade eight because of this....I was made fun of every day....I wished I wasn't [Palestinian-Muslim]." Ally also experienced harassment during the Gulf War: "This one boy told me, 'Why don't you go back to your own country.'"

In the aftermath of the 1982 Sabra and Shatilla massacre Riham remembers being taunted by neighbourhood children: "You're PLO." "No I'm not," she would reply. She told me that at the time she didn't even know what the PLO was, but she wasn't going to let them call her anything. Riham said that this was her "initiation" into being Palestinian. Again, during the American bombing of Libya when she was in 8th grade she felt responsible to defend the entire Arab world in the face of massive US support for the action. When remembering the Gulf War Riham said that Arab-Americans frequently find themselves in the impossible position of having to "defend the indefensible" as a result of being "under siege".

Some Palestinian-American boys in Chicago took the defence of their community into their own hands during the Gulf War. While Palestinian-American boys have a history of joining American gangs, it was not until the Gulf War that a specifically Palestinian-American gang emerged. The Arab Posse (TAP or "the Posse") first formed as a defensive response to protect Palestinian-Americans who were threatened, harassed, and attacked in the south-side of Chicago during the months that led up to, and for the duration of, the Gulf War in 1990-91. They took shifts on the street as a protection force during this time. In this respect, TAP's early activities mirror Sudhir Venkatesh's (1997) findings that gangs are situated within a network of community relations and are sometimes known to provide valuable community services in the absence of adequate municipal or state services. TAP discriminated against other Arabs, and began recruiting Palestinian-Americans who were members of other gangs. However, these gang members brought with them "gang mentality and behaviour", as well as live ammunition and enmity from their old gangs. Soon enough, TAP was involved in Chicago's gang wars and became like any other gang. Palestinian-American girls in the south-side wanted to form the

"TAP Girls" but this never got off the ground[17] (Interview with Siham Rashid Odeh, Beit Hanina, 10 October 1997).

This gang activity, like the identification with rap music, with being "Muslim", and with heavy metal, can be seen as the deployment of an identity that at once both "refuses" mainstream American culture in favour of being "Palestinian" while at the same time making a claim to being "American" in a way rather typical of racial and ethnic American minority groups in US inner cities.[18] Gang culture and style, inextricably wrapped up with rap, and especially "gangsta" music, is a widespread phenomenon in the US. As Norma Mendoza-Denton (1996, 51) cautions, "the definition of a 'gang' by the police, by school administrators, and by members themselves is ever more inclusive, sweeping in its wake everything from hard-core incarcerated gang members to 'wannabes', groups of young people who participate in the symbolic display of gang culture (e.g. by writing gang slogans or graffiti on their school notebooks, or by wearing baggy clothes) but have little to do with the more committed aspects of gang affiliation." It is difficult to assess just how many Palestinian-Americans, girls and boys, fall into the category of "wannabes", and how many were hard-core gang members in the US. Nonetheless, expansion of gang formation and activity to small US cities and suburban communities was noted in the late 1980s and 1990s (Huff 1996; Trump 1996). A careful look at Friends Boys School yearbooks (FBS 1995, 1996) reveal that American-Palestinian teenagers wore the clothes and spoke the language (e.g. "the Yearbook Posse") of rap and gang culture, and used the "sign language, occult and crooked palmings, finger Chinese" (Rodriguez 1994, 48) commonly used to denote gang affiliation and which has permeated rap lyrics and imagery. Indeed, one day I was at the Friends School and witnessed a conversation between a new American-Palestinian student and an American teacher at the school who had experience working with delinquent teenage boys in the US. The student was obviously upset about something that had happened in the classroom, rapidly speaking and gesturing to the teacher, who eventually successfully calmed him down. The boy was from New York, the teacher told me. I had asked her because I was not able to understand a word he had said to her, despite being familiar with most variations of the American accent. His speech was peppered with unfamiliar slang and spoken with a black/African-American ghetto accent, and he punctuated his complaints with the "finger Chinese" of the streets.

Participation in gangs or in inner city American adolescent life can prove to be psychologically untenable and physically dangerous. For instance, recently in north-west Chicago a girl who resisted joining one of the girl gangs in her school was murdered, presumably by gang members,

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[17] See Brake (1985, 171) for a brief discussion of girl gangs. The entire chapter gives an overview of girls' involvement in subcultures, including their participation in delinquent behaviour. Mendoza-Denton (1996) discusses Latina girl gangs in California.

and found in a dumpster behind the school (Interview with Siham Rashid Odeh, Beit Hanina, 10 October 1997). Nadia said that she "lost a lot of friends" due to gang violence, alcohol, and drugs in the US. At fourteen a good friend of the same age had a baby. When she moved to the West Bank she wrote to all of her friends and told them that she wasn't going back to the US. When they wrote her back she didn't reply, both because some of them were boys and she felt that it was "too dangerous" to keep correspondence with them, and because she had "had enough":

> I'm glad I'm away from all of that....it was too much pressure. I mean, I was a godmother at fourteen. She named her kid after me....I'm done with America. I've seen too much there....I've lost all contact with my friends there. I never wrote them back....It was enough....In America I was really mean to my mom. I never opened up to her....My friends were my life....I could never open up to all those things with my mom, but now I can talk to her freely.

For Nadia, this way of being "American" was exhausting and ultimately emotionally and socially unsustainable. Instead, she has fully embraced her identity as a Palestinian. Nadia was the only girl I spoke to who unreservedly said that she wanted to live out her life as a Palestinian in the West Bank, marry a local Palestinian man, and bring her own children up in Palestine. She did not want to continue her education at college or university and she did not want to return to the US.[19]

Yet Palestinian-American girls are situated by more than their political, ethnic, and religious identities vis-à-vis white mainstream America. They also negotiate their position in counterpoint with Jewish Americans, black/African-Americans, and through class in comparison to white middle class Americans and other Arabs in the US.[20]

Several of the girls reported living in "Jewish" neighbourhoods in the US, or of having had a significant Jewish American student population at their schools. Invariably, the girls categorised American Jews as "white".[21] Well over half classified their neighbourhoods as "mostly white", and under closer examination some girls would add that many Jewish Americans lived in their neighbourhoods. This quote from Edward Said gives some idea of the subtly antagonistic positioning of Arabs, and especially Palestinians, vis-à-vis Jews in the US by Americans:

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[18] See Kendis and Kendis (1976), Vigil (1983), and Suárez-Oroxco and Suárez-Oroxco (1995) for similar interpretations of gang participation of Chinese-American and Mexican-American boys.

[19] Every other girl I spoke to expressed desire to return to the US, either explicitly or through the ambition to continue their education at college or university (in the US) or to marry a fellow Palestinian-American (so they would eventually relocate to the US as a married couple). I develop this further in chapter 5.

[20] Much of what I have to suggest in these regards is based on limited field data. Other literature pertaining to these issues specifically dealing with the Arab- and Palestinian-American communities seems to be non-existent.

[21] See Sacks (1994) for an account of Jewish "whiteness" in the US.

> Identity--who we are, where we come from, what we are--is difficult to maintain in exile. Most other people take their identity for granted. Not the Palestinian, who is required to show proofs of identity more or less constantly. It is not only that we are regarded as terrorists, but that our existence as native Arab inhabitants of Palestine, with primordial rights there (and not elsewhere), is either denied or challenged. And there is more. Such as it is, our existence is linked negatively to encomiums about Israel's democracy, achievements, excitement; in much Western rhetoric we have slipped into the place occupied by Nazis and anti-Semites; collectively, we can aspire to little except political anonymity and resettlement; we are known for no actual achievement, no characteristic worthy of esteem, except the effrontery of disrupting Middle East peace....We have no known Einsteins, no Chagall, no Freud or Rubinstein to protect us with a legacy of glorious achievements. We have had no Holocaust to protect us with the world's compassion. We are "other", and opposite, a flaw in the geometry of resettlement and exodus. Silence and discretion veil the hurt, slow the body searches, soothe the sting of loss (Said 1986, 16-17).

The very authenticity of being "Palestinian", along with the legitimacy and worthiness of this identity, are under question, especially compared to Jewish suffering in Europe and Jewish and Israeli achievements on the world stage. For instance, Mona Marshy (1994) not only exposes the harassment Arab and Palestinian students at a Canadian university were subject to during the Gulf War, but she also explores the painful exchanges with her room-mate during this time about the credibility of Palestinian self-representations. She had hung a Red Crescent poster that had four reproductions of Palestinian children's art work under the caption "As a Palestinian child I, learned that there is Occupation, Deportation, Tear Gas, and Peace." Her room-mate challenged the authenticity of the art work, suggesting that it was mere propaganda engineered by the organization.

The girls I spoke to reported a variety of experiences and ways of managing their identities in this context. Avoidance is one mode, and it was enacted in two ways by the girls. Avoidance of contact was demonstrated by Amal, who despite growing up in a white, upper-middle class "Jewish" neighbourhood reported that she and her sisters "only had black and Spanish friends (laughing)." On the other hand, Lana's family owns a jewellery store that is frequented by many affluent Jewish customers. Under instruction from her father, she and her siblings identify themselves as "Lebanese" in the store when asked.

However, sometimes girls reported being used as a stand-in for others' antagonism towards Jewish Americans. For instance, Khadija told me: "In my school they hated Jews and they'd try to make trouble and say, 'That person's a Jew. Go do something.'"

Some girls struggled with their own anger towards Israel in their relationships with Jews and Israelis in the US. Aisha was always careful to distinguish between Jews and Israelis and said that politically she never felt angry towards "Jews" for the Palestinian predicament: "I never hated 'Jews', but I hated 'Israel'.... My mother blames the 'Jews' but my father blames the 'Israelis.'" After spending several years in the West Bank during the *intifada* Aisha returned to the US with her

parents for grade ten. That year, "in [my class] I was 'the Arab.'" When she had lived previously in her neighbourhood she had been very good friends with Dov, an Israeli Jew. However, when she returned she found that she couldn't be friendly with him. She continually had to remind herself that it wasn't Dov who was a soldier, that it wasn't Dov who had committed all of the*intifada* atrocities that she had been witness to, but it was difficult to separate him from those with whom who he identified. Her reaction contradicted his expectation that they would have all kinds of things in common now that she had been to the Occupied Territories (or, perhaps, "Israel" in his estimation). They spent half the year fighting viciously, but ultimately were able to resolve their differences. When the Oslo Accord was announced they did an imitation of "the handshake" for their class. In this we see that Aisha stood in for her entire nation, as perhaps did Dov.

Other girls also reported this type of "international diplomacy". Riham, who was the only Muslim Arab in her school (besides her siblings) in a student population that was almost half Jewish, reported that in her high school a lot of the Jewish students reassured her that they understood the Arab point of view. She attributed this attitude to their "educated" backgrounds.

Finally, Amal recounted a story that reflects a negative account of this type of engagement. One of her friends, who was unable to baby-sit for a family she usually worked for, asked Amal to replace her. Amal agreed, and went to the family's house. She said that it was immediately clear to her that they were Jewish (the husband was wearing a *kipa* or Jewish skullcap). The couple eventually asked her about her name, saying that it was unusual, and asked her "where was she from". "Palestine," Amal replied. The couple's reaction was, "oh, that it was ok, no problem," but "could you not mention it to the child because it might frighten him?" Amal refused and walked out. Still outraged almost a decade later, Amal exclaimed at the end of the story:

> It was ok because I was sitting there and talking to them--I didn't *seem* "Palestinian", but they had programmed their little boy to be afraid of me....It was beyond getting pissed off at.

Palestinians, then, often find themselves dealing with their political conflict with Israelis when they engage with Jews in the US. Yet America is not a "level-playing field", just as it is not in Israel, the occupied Palestinian territories, and the autonomous Palestinian areas where the US ally is dominant. Ideologically, Palestinians are at a distinct disadvantage in the US when it comes to asserting and owning their identities and the truth of the injustice that is their historical national lot. Khadija, rather than being able to choose her own battles, was urged to fight others' as if they were hers. Amal still suffers from the sting of being branded a terrorist in a situation where she sees only her own people as victims. Even when "diplomatic" solutions are found, or avoidance is deployed as a strategy, the conflict is implicit, and sometimes explicit as in Aisha's case.

Aside from engaging with Jewish Americans, Palestinian migrants must also negotiate their position in American society amongst whites as the dominant racial group in the US, "white ethnics",[22] black/African-Americans, and other non-white racial/ethnic groups. As was mentioned above, immigrants often attempt to jockey for a more favourable position in the social hierarchy that is closer to, or part of, the dominant ethnic/racial/national group. Caribbeans in the US provide an interesting example of this type of positioning:

> [the] ideology of cultural pluralism in the 1960s [in the US] enabled Caribbean and Filipino immigrants to begin to present themselves as discrete and competing ethnic populations, which in their eyes removed them from social placement on the bottom. In some ways, rather than uniting with U.S. blacks, they became intermediate groups between U.S. blacks and whites (Basch, Schiller, Blanc 1994, 284-5).

However, there are even greater subtleties to this manoeuvring, where assimilation but not acculturation is delicately balanced in an effort to maintain their positions at the top of their racial categories in the US:

> Instead of the bottom, Caribbeans are placed at the top rungs of the racial categories into which they are incorporated. They are generally regarded by the "gatekeepers" of American society in a more favorable light than the black Americans and Puerto Ricans with whom they are compared and to whom they compare themselves. Moreover, they daily witness the fact that the Americanization of black Americans and Puerto Ricans has involved, over time, more downward than upward mobility, a general deskilling, cultural denigration, and continued separation from the resources and rewards of "mainstream" society....Thus Caribbeans do not see shedding their separate Caribbean-based identities as advantageous to improving their socioeconomic status. Theirs is a case of aiming for economic assimilation without acculturation (Sutton 1992, 234).

Arabs however, as we have seen above, do not seem to have a racial category into which they are automatically slotted in the US. This is demonstrated by their frequent invisibility in American society.[23] Thus, they are left with a variety of options. One is to claim a Muslim identity, less appealing to the parents of the generation of girls that I spoke to than to the girls themselves, but the attractiveness of this option is also contingent on class and context. Another is to "pass", such as the girl mentioned in *"Benaat* Chicago" did (albeit as "Puerto Rican"), and as a few the girls I spoke to reported doing.

In the Egyptian case, Soheir Morsy (1994, 189-90) suggests that many emigrants identify as "honourary whites":

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[22] The term "white ethnic" refers to groups of non-Anglo, non-Protestant European ancestry.

[23] Of course, this varies sharply with their extreme political visibility, especially at times of heightened tension or war in the Middle East, or, as more recently demonstrated in the aftermath of the New York

> new immigrants who want to succeed in racially stratified U.S. society may well try to distance themselves from socially debased categories....For these Egyptians, the honorary "white" classification....facilitates affiliation with the hegemonic social group....In addition to some Egyptians' opportunistic detachment from African identity, U.S. residents of Egyptian origin are also likely to shun their Arab identity in favor of nation-state, Islamic, or Coptic affiliation....the suppression of Arab identity is...understandable in light of U.S. foreign policy.

Nabeel Abraham (1989, 21) discusses the dynamic of "ethnic denial" amongst some Arab-Americans who are influenced by the stigmatisation of Arabs and Muslims in the US. This mode of "passing" takes the form of deliberate denial or de-emphasis of their Arab and/or Muslim backgrounds, or the stressing of those aspects that are "neutral" or unknown in the US, such as being "Coptic", "Ramallan", "Kurdish", or "Jordanian". Abraham (1989, 21) posits that "such self-identifications appear to be partially motivated by the desire for unhindered entrance into the American mainstream leading to rapid socioeconomic mobility, thought to be jeopardised by identification with Arab (or Muslim) culture."

Abraham (1989) also discusses the strategy of "ethnic isolation", which is the "conscious attempt to preserve one's culture by turning inward as a community", reminiscent of Cainkar's (1988) "new peasant migrant" neighbourhoods in Chicago. However, I think that even some of those Arab-American migrants who choose "ethnic denial", such as perhaps some of the parents of the girls I spoke to, can follow a two-track approach that encompasses "ethnic isolation" as well. While the men of these families are free to pursue "American" lifestyles, their wives, sisters, and daughters are constrained by the exigencies of maintaining the "Palestinian" nature of the family through the proper observance of the codes of honour and modesty. I will return to a more detailed discussion of this in the next chapter.

The dynamic of "ethnic denial" may have been at work in the case of Nancy and her family. In Nancy's US community there were many Mexican migrant workers who mostly received the "red-neck" attention from the townspeople. Nancy's family, however, mostly passed as "white": "We assimilated well and most people just thought we were 'American[24]....If we were discriminated against it was because some stupid bigot thought we were Mexican.'[25]

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Trade Center bombing in New York in 1993 and the Oklahoma City bombing in 1995 (which white American extremists were responsible for).

[24] I will return to what "American" identity means in the US context, but suffice it to say here that "whiteness" is an inherent part of it.

[25] It should be noted that Nancy and her family allowed themselves to "pass", but if asked directly "what we were" they answered "Arabic".

Remember that many of the girls reported being mistaken for "Spanish",[26] "Italian", or "Greek"--all European identities, and thus "white" in the contemporary US,[27] as Linda Basch, Nina Glick Schiller, and Cristina Szanton Blanc (1994, 40) assert when they write: "European immigrant workers came to identify with America and positioned themselves on the side of its dominant class". Indeed, being a "white ethnic" in the US today poses little problem, allowing the choice of incomplete acculturation but economic and social assimilation, and also the neat positioning above disadvantaged ethnic/racial hierarchical positions or categories:

> At present, the costs of being and feeling [white] ethnic are slight. The changes which the immigrants and their descendants wrought in America now make it unnecessary for ethnics to surrender their ethnicity to gain upward mobility, and today ethnics are admitted virtually everywhere, provided they meet economic and status requirements, except at the very highest levels of the economic, political, and cultural hierarchies. Moreover, since World War II, the ethnics have been able to shoulder blacks and other racial minorities with the deviant and scapegoat functions they performed in an earlier America, so that ethnic prejudice and "institutional ethnism" are no longer significant, except again at the very top of the societal hierarchies (Gans 1979, 15).

If Herbert Gans (1979) and Constance Sutton (1992) are correct, non-white migrants to the US capable of "passing" as "white ethnics" can not only situate themselves above non-white American ethnic/racial hierarchical positions, but they also benefit from that positioning because of the continued scapegoating of black/African-Americans and other racial US minorities. My first hint that Palestinians in the US might participate in this type of positioning came during my interview with Aisha, who mentioned that when she had returned to the US for grade ten her father hated "black men" looking at her on the street.[28]

A former teacher at the Friends Boys School in Ramallah told me about an incident that took place in her classroom where one of her American-Palestinian students identified herself as "black" to express a commonality of experience with other "people of colour" in the US. Ironically, given their appropriation of rap culture (also see Back 1993, 1996), her American-Palestinian classmates vigorously rejected this girl's characterization of herself (and by extension them) as "black",[29] insisting instead that they were "white". The teacher, Dina Abou-El-Haj, felt that this reaction was reflective of the general racism found in Palestinian society where black Palestinians from Jericho and black Muslims originally from Chad but now resident in Jerusalem's Old City are marginalised. Abou-El-Haj mentioned that her American-Palestinian

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[26] Note that "Spanish" stands in contrast to "Hispanic", "Chicana", or "Latina"--all of which stand for ethnicities that are non-European, non-"white", and thus lower in hierarchical ranking.

[27] See Gans (1979) and Waters (1990) for a discussion of European ethnicities in the US as optional identities, almost in the vein of a leisurely pursuit. Non-northern, non-Anglo European migrants to the US in these works are demonstrated to have become "American".

[28] Aisha later amended this section of the account of our interviews by crossing out the adjective "black" and writing that her father "hated and hates all men who look at my sister, mother or I."

students used the term "nigger" liberally (Interview, 20 April 1998, Ramallah), but it is difficult to understand their meaning of "nigger" without knowing the contexts in which they used the term. That is, it could be used in ways that position them within rap or gang discourses, or alternatively it could be used to position themselves "above" blacks or others they deem inferior.

Cindy's story is yet more illuminating. In the seventh grade Cindy went to a "black" school (i.e. most of the students there were black/African-American and came from another part of town to go to her school). It was at this time that Cindy first remembers feeling "different" in a way that was not comfortable:

> When I was young I didn't feel different at all, from 1st to 6th grade, but when I got to 7th grade it was different. I knew I was Muslim and I was different from other kids....All the kids knew the Arabs had stores--can't they do anything else? Thank God my dad doesn't have one--and they would tease me about it.

Dina corroborated this stereotype of the Arab grocery store owner when she told me that her father owned one. She asked rhetorically, but laughing, "What else?" (*cf.* Bonacich 1973). Here it should be remembered that Palestinians often own stores in inner city areas where residence tends to be dominated by black/African-Americans (AAAN n.d; Massey, Denton 1988). This context, then, is reminiscent of the Korean (grocery store owning class)-black/African-American tensions found in New York City, Washington, Philadelphia, and Los Angeles,[30] where black/African-American residents of inner-city neighbourhoods accuse Korean small-business owners of economically exploiting their communities without investing any of the revenue back into their neighbourhoods. Black/African-American residents also complain about the absence of local black/African-American employees in Korean-owned shops. Koreans, like Palestinians, typically rely on family labour. Koreans, also like Palestinians, tend to position themselves with the dominant white American mainstream and do not live in the neighbourhoods they do business in, preferring the suburbs instead, setting up a racialised class differentiation. This, too, generates resentment amongst their black customers, exacerbated by the perception amongst black/African-Americans of Koreans as newcomers to the US. For their part, Koreans fear black violence (Jo 1992, Park 1996). Resentment against Arab shop-owners also exists (Johnson, Olivier 1989; Gates 1996, 151), and in some instances where violence has ensued, Arab shop-owners have reconsidered their occupational options or those of their sons (Sengstock 1974).

This tension came to the surface during my interviews with Dalal. I asked her if her future husband had to be Arab. Could he, for instance, be a "black" American Muslim? Many of the girls

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[29] It should be noted here that Americans use the term "black" almost exclusively in reference to those of African descent, unlike in Britain where "black" frequently includes people of Asian descent.
[30] Indeed, Cohen and Tyree (1994, 253) compare the Palestinian small business-owning class to Koreans in the US.

tended to elide "Muslim" with "Arab" when discussing potential future marriage partners. When they reported that they had to marry a Muslim, they also implicitly assumed that he would be Arab. Dalal said that she wouldn't marry a "black", that her *balad* is very prejudiced against "blacks", believing them to be responsible for "crime against Arabs" in the US. She added that she wouldn't marry a "black" "because it would bring my father down....and I respect my father too much for that." Her father was murdered in his grocery store. The crime was never solved.

There is also an internal dynamic of differentiation within the Arab community in the US. As Sameer Abraham (1983), Cainkar (1988, 1994), and the AAAN (n.d.) illustrate, residence patterns in Detroit and Chicago demonstrate that lower, lower-middle, and working class Arabs tend to cluster in neighbourhoods that also accommodate black/African-Americans and Hispanics. These Arabs tend to be Muslim. Christian Arabs, who mostly tend to be middle and upper-middle class, live separately from middle and upper-middle class Muslim Arabs, but both groups tend to live in white neighbourhoods and suburbs.

However, only a couple of the girls mentioned this dynamic in their interviews with me. Dalal told me that her family never associated with other Arabs living in her US city, although there was a sizeable Arab community resident there. The reason was, apparently, because the Arab community lived in the upper-middle class side of town, or "a higher class area", to use Dalal's words. Laila detailed this dynamic more explicitly. Her parents are both Palestinian urbanites[31] and they lived in a white upper-middle class suburb in the US. Aside from their non-Arab-American friends, Laila's parents mainly socialised with Syrian-Americans in her city's Arab community, rather than with the Palestinian-Americans. While the Palestinians tended to originate from villages and were small-business owners, the Syrians were mostly upper-middle class professionals and business people, and therefore more compatible with Laila's parents' class positioning of themselves.

Class and ethnic positions must also be analysed in order to understand these girls' American identities. The Palestinian-American girls I spoke to not only articulated, or obscured their identities, as Palestinians, Arabs, or Muslims, but also identified as Americans. As I have already discussed, Palestinian-Americans living in mixed race contexts find they are comfortable identifying as "Muslim", and can do so without compromising their American identity. Others might "pass" as another ethnicity that is more acceptably American. Palestinian-Americans can also participate in black/African-American ghetto subculture and gang activity as a way of being "American".

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[31] Most Palestinian urbanites who emigrated to the US were also Christian. However, Laila's parents are Muslim.

However, many of the girls I spoke to grew up in mostly white, middle and upper-middle class suburbs. How did these girls deploy American identities? "At the core of the U.S. concept of nation has been a concept of whiteness," declare Basch, Schiller, and Blanc (1994, 40). Indeed, the "assumption of whiteness [can be seen] as a diacritic of [American] citizenship" (Basch, Schiller, Blanc 1994, 41). At the same time, "shared mass consumption practices provided and still provide Americans with the means not only for developing a collective common sense but also for anchoring the imagined national community in daily practice" (Foster 1991, 250). Thus, being American not only means being "white", it also means the ability to participate in consumer society and practices.[32] For instance, Paul Glennie (1995, 184) cites A.R. Heinze's (1990) study of Jewish migrants to the US at the turn of the century when he maintains that "migrants to America 'could gain a sense of social membership more quickly as consumers than as workers'...and mass consumption was a component of Jewish acculturation there".

In her study of black/African-American college-age girls who had grown up in white middle and upper-middle class suburbs, France Winddance Twine (1996) found that these girls reported taking on a "white" identity in their adolescence.[33] These girls grew up in an entirely white middle class suburban milieu, where they were most often the only non-white residents in their neighbourhood and school, and where shopping at malls was one of the primary leisure activities. Far from feeling isolated in this context, Twine's respondents felt a sense of cultural belonging. It was only when in university and encountering other black/African-American students like themselves that they began to take up black/African-American identities. Twine explains their assumption of white identities by their class position and the consumption practices that this conferred:

> The women whom I interviewed identified their socio-economic status as the basis for their claim to a white cultural identity. In other words, they argued that they had been white because they had the same *material* privileges and socio-economic advantages of their suburban peers. Hence, a white identity claim becomes inextricably linked to a middle-class economic position....The importance of material consumption cannot be overstated in its ability to confer an identity that makes residents of any racial background culturally invisible and acceptable members of the community (1996, 212, 213).

When I asked the girls what they missed about the US, almost invariably the answer would be, after answering how they missed friends and remaining family, "the malls" and "McDonalds." Many also said that they missed feeling "normal". Twine gives a racial interpretation of

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[32] Also see Hegeman (1991) for a discussion of the articulation of ethnicity and consumption as represented as "American" in the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of American History's 1976 "A Nation of Nations" exhibit.

[33] Alternatively, Wulff's (1995) study of "black" and "white" teenage girls in a lower-middle and working class South London neighbourhood indicates that the girls practised being "black and white together." Nonetheless, being "white" was a measure of being English, as one "white" girl in the study said to Wulff of her "black" contemporaries, "There are black people who are English inside" (Wulff 1995, 67).

"normal" that may have some application in these girls' cases, where being white American in the US means a privileged social, political, and material existence. Being Palestinian in the Israeli-occupied territories means being oppressed politically and materially, and being American-Palestinian in the West Bank means being marked as "different" socially:

> In addition to being a racially neutral site, a white identity emerged as a position of indifference to race(ism) or racialized issues. Blackness becomes conflated with being oppressed and whiteness is conflated with the privilege of "normalcy" (Twine 1996, 215).

The material standard of living that the girls had enjoyed in the US was also something they unfavourably compared to living in the West Bank. For instance, when writing about the experience of "returning" to the West Bank as an American-Palestinian, one girl wrote, "A major obstacle is leaving America's materialistic benefits (shopping, fast food, better television shows) and regressing to a more stoic [*sic*] society" (Hallak 1996, 139). Most girls, when I asked them what they would like to do in the US if they had a chance to go back to visit, answered that they would like to go shopping. Dalal's response to the question of what she most misses about the US is typical of many of the girls' answers:

> In the US you can just get in a car and drive around and go places, go out...and people mind their own business, not like here where everyone knows everything about everyone...and here there's no heat or air-conditioning, and we didn't have hot water here for three years....there [the US] you have more opportunities than you have here...and it's so stressful here--I started losing my hair!...and the water is different here--it gets cut off so much...and the thing I miss the most is the mall! When I go to Tel Aviv I think, "OK, I could live here", but Ramallah--I hate Ramallah...it's like a garbage dump.

Here Dalal weaves comparisons of the social conditions in both places with the material. What is also striking here is that Dalal identifies, on the basis of their differing standards of living, with Israelis, the military occupiers of her village, rather than with her fellow Palestinians, an issue to which I will return.

Shopping in the mall was one of the few "American" social activities these girls were permitted by their parents to participate in when resident in the US. At the mall, the girls chose designer label and name brand clothing popular amongst their peers at school, bought CDs and cassettes of the most current music, and ate Burger King and McDonald's fast food. But consumption activity is not the only or even the main goal of frequenting shopping malls (Shields 1992; Lehtonen, Mäenpää 1997). In the new literature on consumption, shopping, and malls, the suburban shopping mall is characterised as the new city centre (Lehtonen, Mäenpää 1997), community centre (Shields 1992), leisure centre (Jackson 1991), or recreational centre (Hopkins 1990). Shopping at malls has been likened to tourism, and the shopping mall is now recognized as a tourist site (Hopkins 1991; Shields 1992; Lehtonen, Mäenpää 1997). In Canada, time spent in shopping malls ranks third after that spent at school or work (Hopkins 1990, 7). And while

Canadians spend a considerable amount of time in malls, in the US there are more malls per million people and more floor space per person in those malls, a greater distribution of malls in the suburbs,[34] and significantly lower average sales per square foot (Simmons 1991, 239-40). All of this suggests that suburban shopping malls are at least as socially significant in the US as they are in Canada. The public and social nature of shopping malls contribute to "the myth of *egalitarianism* through shopping" (Hopkins 1990, 13), consistent with the ability to gain access to a sense of Americanness or American citizenship through consumption, as mentioned above.

The mall, as Hillevi Ganetz (1995, 84) indicates, "is...a safe as well as an exciting place for women: it is safe because unlike the street it is supervised and guarded, and it is exciting because it remains a public place to which everyone has access and in which unforeseen encounters can occur" (also see Hopkins 1991; Shields 1992; Lehtonen, Mäenpää 1997). Because of the danger associated with city streets and the monitored and therefore "safe" environment of the shopping mall, it is an increasingly popular leisure space for girls (Kostash 1987, 262). The mall was one of the few safe but unscrutinised (by their parents and other authority figures)[35] public spaces to which the Palestinian-American girls I spoke to had access. More than just a space for consumption and shopping, the mall offered a social, public space in which to participate in "American" society. "The...mix of anonymity and control...offer a perfect opportunity to young people to test both their own boundaries and those of their surroundings," claims Ganetz (1995, 84; also see Langman 1992, 58-61; Lehtonen, Mäenpää 1997, 160). For instance, while Ally could go out with her sisters to the mall, she didn't like going with her parents: "You know how it is over there [in the US]....a guy might hit on you but you can ignore it or tell him to get lost and it's ok. But if your parents are there they go crazy." Several commentators note the importance of malls to teenagers, but few offer concrete empirical data. However, Jeffrey Hopkins (1991, 274) notes that because teenagers tend to have more leisure time and less money[36] than other segments of society their widespread use of shopping malls is likely more social than economic in nature. In his survey of students attending a high school in the West Edmonton Mall[37] vicinity he found that over

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[34] Large Canadian cities have big shopping malls in their downtown cores. In the US this is uncommon (Simmons 1991, 239-40).

[35] Several of the girls reported being permitted to frequent the mall with only their sisters, or even in some cases, with their girlfriends.

[36] However, with the widespread phenomena of North American teenagers holding down part-time jobs, it might be the case that teenagers have more disposable income than some segments of employed adults who must meet rent or mortgage, utility, grocery and other types of monthly and weekly bills.

[37] The West Edmonton Mall in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, was at the time of its completed construction in 1986, the largest shopping mall in the world, and still might be today. It occupies a 110-acre site, is two stories and 5,200,000 square feet large, contains over 600 stores and services, and offers 11,775 spaces in its parking lot. Among its non-shopping attractions are nineteen movie theatres, a seven-acre water park, a NHL-size skating rink, an eighteen-hole miniature golf course, an amusement park that includes a triple-loop roller coaster, and a four-acre sea aquarium with 4 fully-functioning submarines (Hopkins 1990, 5). The WEM is unique in Canada--most shopping malls are not this large or house these types of recreational facilities--but its importance as a neighbourhood mall for the students Hopkins surveyed is illustrated by the fact that students attending school (and therefore probably also living) close to the WEM tended to visit it

80% of his respondents used the mall regularly for socializing and recreational activities, with only a minority visiting it in order to purchase goods. Their answers to a variety of questions indicate that they saw the mall as an important social site, and one where they felt welcome and comfortable. About 60% of students answered that they tried to "look their best" when visiting the mall, suggesting its importance as an arena where encounters with peers is expected (Hopkins 1991, 275-7).

However, the meaning of consumer items and acts of consumption are also important in and of themselves. Consumption has now been recognised by anthropologists and sociologists as an important activity in the constitution of persons (Campbell 1995; Miller 1995, 274-9). The mothers of the girls I spoke to, like other suburban middle class American mothers, bought and prepared popular American convenience foods for their families. It should be noted here that Cainkar (1988, 191) found that only those Palestinian-American women living in white middle and upper-middle class US suburbs served American-style convenience food to their families. The wives and mothers of these families preferred serving American food to Arab food because of its ease of preparation, but the more traditional, lower and lower-middle class Palestinian-Americans she interviewed criticised this type of food. While Cainkar does not offer reasons for this criticism, I believe that it was probably based on several factors. First, prepared and processed food is generally more expensive than fresh and unprocessed food, making it less attractive to families of low income. Second, and perhaps more significantly, in the West Bank, food that is *baladi* (of the land, local) is considered to be the best, tastiest, and most nutritious (also see Maclagan 1994, 163-4). Indeed, non-urban or non-upper middle class Palestinians tend to be quite cautious about food and trying new foods. For instance, when I extended a dinner invitation to a friend who lives in a refugee camp, she cautiously asked me what it was I was going to cook for her. Other Palestinians I have made dinner for have tentatively (and discreetly) picked through and examined the food on their plates before taking careful bites.[38] American-style convenience food is also termed "fast food" and "junk food". It doesn't take a nutritionist to figure out that fresh vegetables and grains provide better nutrition than dried and powdered "food" out of a box, such as "Kraft Dinner", or convenience microwave foods. Finally, the preparation, serving, and consumption of food are central to culture (Tapper, Zubaida 1991), and Palestinians are proud of their cuisine. Thus, the choice to prepare and eat American food over Palestinian food would perhaps be seen by Cainkar's more traditional respondents as a betrayal of Palestinian culture.

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more often and incorporated it into their day-to-day lives in a way not demonstrated by a group of students surveyed who did not live or attend school near the WEM. Hopkins says that "neighbourhood adolescents use WEM in the traditional sense of a local shopping mall: a place to eat and drink, kill some time after school, and hang out" (Hopkins 1991, 275).

At home, Palestinian-American families owned large colour TVs, VCRs, CD players, and modern kitchen appliances. For vacations, if not travelling to the West Bank, they would visit popular American holiday venues such as Disney World. These consumer goods sat next to posters of Arafat and the golden dome of the *Haram al-Sharif* mosque complex, the Palestinian flag, brasswork and *tatriz*, and the vacations alternated with or replaced during the *intifada* years visits to the West Bank. In many respects then, their family consumption patterns resembled those of their white, middle class, suburban, American neighbours, while also displaying goods that signified "Palestinianness". Consumption of these consumer durable goods, vacations, foods, clothing, and music is "the arena in which and through which people have to struggle towards control over the definition of themselves and their values" (Miller 1995, 277). This cultural hybridity or hyphenation, or "symbolic ethnicity", while indicating "difference" is also uniquely North American (Gans 1979, Waters 1990). The girls I spoke to reported great sensitivity to how their access or lack of it to consumer goods important to teenage girls in the US determined how easily they "fit in" at school. While Palestinian artefacts and food in the home might have been fine, wearing trendy "American" clothing and participating in "American" activities were critical to the girls' comfort level at school and determined which peer group they socialised with.

Laila said that in Palestine her parents considered themselves to be white[39] and this identity continued in the US where they lived in white neighbourhoods and lived an upper-middle class white lifestyle in terms of leisurely pursuits, food, clothing, and education. However,Laila first remembers living in a lower-middle class neighbourhood in the US where her father owned a bar. When she was ten, her father sold the bar and they moved to an upper-middle class neighbourhood which was "99% white". Shortly after the move, Laila recalled having difficulties "fitting in" at her new, white, upper-middle class junior high school, where the other students were all "preps" who were only interested in "their looks and clothes". The boys at the school, Laila said, made her feel like an "outcast", and not attractive at all. Although she reported that the exclusion she experienced was class-based (she had just moved from a lower-middle class neighbourhood and did not possess all of the necessary middle class accoutrements in terms of clothing), there are hints that ethnicity also played a role. Laila explained that she was always subjected to questions like "What kind of name is 'Laila'? Is that ethnic?" Here we are reminded of Gans's (1979, 3) statement that "ethnicity is largely a working-class style".

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[38] From many accounts I am a good cook!

[39] Muhawi and Kanaana (1989, 122, 212) elaborate on the association of whiteness with beauty in Palestinian folklore. Whiteness is also associated with the upper classes and an urban locale--both markers of privilege in Palestinian society.

Two other girls recalled their painful returns to the US when they were in their early adolescence. Riham and Alia both returned to the US with their parents after spending significant periods of time in Jordan and the West Bank, respectively, and had not acquired the sensibilities of style that their American counterparts had developed.

Riham found that when she returned to the US for her eighth grade it was difficult to fit in, even with her old crowd of friends. All the girls were "into" name-brand clothes and other markers of style. She related one incident where a girl picked at the sleeve of her sweater and asked, "What's this, 'Esprit'?" Riham remembered that she didn't know what the girl was talking about and could only reply stupidly, "Huh?" She found the concerns of the girls in her class to be "superficial, stupid, and immature." Riham ended up "hanging out" with the headbangers at school, but had no friends otherwise: "no one else wanted to hang out with me." As implied by Riham, according to a study of Canadian teenage girls, being a headbanger is considered a marginal as well as undesirable subcultural style by both mainstream and other subcultural groups, with upper-middle class girls disdaining this group, and middle class girls finding themselves having to defend their choice to participate with a heavy metal crowd (Kostash 1987; also see Walser 1993).

Riham hoped to make a "new start" in high school, but was unsuccessful in doing so. She attributed much of this failure to her lack of participation in the usual "American" adolescent social activities such as dating, parties, and dances. However, what was most painful for Riham during these years was the issue of her sexual attractiveness. She remembered that none of the boys in her school ever "asked me out" and that she was "plagued" by the question of whether this was because they knew that she couldn't date because of her religion, or because she was not attractive?

Twine (1996, 216-17) writes that it is during puberty and adolescence that her respondents first reported disjuncture in their white identities based on the exclusion they experienced in their peers' dating practices. For many, this experience was the first time that their "difference" was made clear to them.

> For women of color, being selected by a male as a "public" romantic partner is an important aspect of their white sociocultural experience. During puberty, they became aware that they were not desired by their male peers or pursued by them as potential romantic partners....A woman must be desired and publicly recognized as a legitimate romantic partner of a white male in order to maintain a white cultural identity. The peer groups must affirm and support the selection of the partner for them to be seen as white (Twine 1996, 217).

Already smarting from the exclusion she experienced at her middle school, Laila was hurt in a serious car accident the summer before she began high school, forcing her to use a wheel chair for her entire grade nine. The inactivity enforced by her accident caused her to gain weight ("I

gained a lot of weight in the wheelchair...I was a fat blob"), and being confined to a wheelchair made her feel like a misfit in her new school: "it was so embarrassing...everyone was staring at me...[like] I was a freak of nature". It was the following summer, after her recovery, that she began meeting friends from the headbanger crowd at her high school. She felt accepted by this new group of friends, and liked feeling attractive when the "guys" began asking her out. While Laila's experience could mirror that of any white American girl, her situation had the added nuance of being Palestinian-American and being conscious of her "ethnic" name and background and the adolescent social perils associated with this.

Alia's return to the US in 1989 was very difficult, she recalled. Her clothes were "all wrong", and she couldn't "fit in" with her peers, who unlike herself, were interested in and concerned about boys. She said, "Sixth grade was the worst year in my whole life." Alia "hung out" with another girl who was also unpopular, "we clung together really", and Alia was called a "lesbian" by her schoolmates because of this friendship. She said that she had to look the word up in the dictionary to find out what it meant, and "I still didn't get it." In grade seven she moved to a new school. Alia told me in that order to "understand me" one has to know about this year. She said that she learned a lot, but "to this day it still affects me." During this year she tried to "fit in", and in the process went against a lot of her beliefs. She "saw" two boys in grade seven. The first one was a friend of her brother's, but he "broke it off" after he realized that he "wasn't going to get anywhere" with her. Alia explained that she was only interested in him because he was interested in her, but when he broke it off it hurt her. Then, she began to "see" another boy who "was all hands." Alia said that she didn't even like him, that he was "gross", and that her friends didn't like him either, but she began "seeing" him to "get back" at the first boy. Finally, she decided that these experiences were too painful to sustain, and in grade eight she tried "to be myself". Alia decided that "I didn't need to be American....being American meant being popular and having open relationships [sexual relations between boys and girls]."

Unlike Twine's (1996) respondents, the Palestinian-American girls I spoke to had taken up incomplete versions of white or other American identities. Some girls chose subcultural identities, such as being headbangers, rappers, or being involved with gangs or friends who were in gangs. Others resigned themselves to the social margins of their mainstream American peers--being friendly with them in school, but not socializing with them outside of school activities or hours. These partial or variant American identities are taken up in part, and can be explained by their difference from Twine's informants in terms of the identities their parents fostered. Twine's (1996, 211) informants' parents encouraged "American" identities for their children by cultivating racial "neutrality":

> In addition to growing up in residentially segregated communities surrounded by middle- and upper middle-class peers, an ideological condition identified as necessary to acquiring a white identity was, in the words of some informants, racial "neutrality". Racial "neutrality" was defined as the childhood experience of seeing themselves as racially *invisible* or racially neutral.

While the girls I spoke to and their parents may have presented themselves as racially neutral, their parents certainly did not accept an ethnically, religiously, or nationally neutral identity for their daughters, as was evident through their imposition of the practice of restrictions on the social activities of their daughters.[40] These restrictions not only denied the girls participation in typically "American" adolescent activities (dating, parties, dances, and even in some cases extra-curricular sports and clubs), it also prevented their full engagement in the types of activities that form the basis of girls' subculture as outlined by Myrna Kostash (1987), Angela McRobbie and Jenny Garber (1991), Ganetz (1995), and Helena Wulff (1988, 1995). Visiting girlfriends' homes (i.e. their bedrooms) where the main activities are smoking, listening to music, gossiping, and trying on each other's clothing, forms the basis of emotional and social bonding with other girls. Several of the girls reported not being allowed to go to other friends' homes, and many others, as we have seen, said that not being permitted to engage in "normal" teenage activities denied them entry into the ranks of the popular, and thus also invitations to these bedrooms. This interrupted the girls' full uptake of American identities, whether striving for full acceptance in middle and upper-middle class white girls' subcultures, or in black/African-American ghetto or gang subcultures.[41]

## Being "American" and "Palestinian" in the West Bank

When diasporic groups return to the homeland, the welcome extended to them is frequently ambivalent. Diasporic groups are often viewed by their compatriots still resident in the home country as both privileged and tainted:

> While the homelands are grateful for that support [remittances and political support], they view the diaspora with a certain disdain for having been enticed by the fleshpots of capitalism and for retaining a vulgarized ethnic culture (Safran 1991, 93).

Palestinian-Americans also meet with resentment once back in Palestine: "A lot of Arabs here are mad at us [American-Palestinians]....most people here feel like we deserted them and then we came back when there's nothing wrong [post-*intifada*, post-Oslo]," reported Khadija and Ally. This

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[40] I discuss this issue in full in the next chapter. Suffice it to say here that the practice of restrictions is inextricably linked to their Palestinian parents' notions of family honour and their own Palestinian identities.

[41] It should be noted here that Palestinian-American boys are not subjected to restrictions on their social activities in the US in the same way that their sisters are. They are commonly allowed (or their parents turn

sentiment was also observed by Alia el-Yassir, a former teacher at the Ramallah Friends Boys School:

> The [Palestinian] community, I've never felt was positive [towards American-Palestinians]....they [American-Palestinians] stick out, and people here don't like things that stick out, it really makes people uncomfortable....They're [American-Palestinians] arrogant, and I think people resent them: "You've come from outside and you have no idea what we've been through. We've been beaten down again and again." And they're affluent. Their money comes from outside, and people here work so hard just to get by. And they're so arrogant...(Interview, Jerusalem, 8 October 1997).

Issues of class play no small part in the reception of American-Palestinians in the West Bank. As mentioned in chapter two, it was mostly Palestinians with some access to resources, rather than those families who were destitute, who were able to send their sons to the US. This is similar to migratory groups from other countries (Boyd 1989, 642). However, tensions may arise because migration to the US, or to other western countries, can serve to reinforce, or even create, class differentiation or polarisation within home communities:

> transnationalism can lead to further class differentiation within the home societies, and even within families, as wealth produced through migration is used to establish or buttress class positions back home. Wealth gained in the United States has been used to improve the class positions of transmigrants in both the United States and back home (Basch, Schiller, Blanc 1994, 279).

While none of the girls I spoke to addressed this issue directly, some of them were aware of their privileged class position in their villages and communities. For instance,Linda claimed that being upper-middle class in the US gave her more freedom in her West Bank village, particularly with respect to social expectations. In contrast to other girls in her village, she drove the family car and was planning to attend university in the US. Laila, an upper-middle class urban American-Palestinian, raised eyebrows with her continued dress as a headbanger but did not receive more censure than being the object of gossip and looks askance in her direction. It is inconceivable that had she lived in a village, or even came from a middle class family, that she would have been able to dress this way.

While in the US class is partly articulated with racial and ethnic categories, in Palestine social status is associated with family and locale (city, village, or camp). This is not to say that there is no differentiation within families and various locales, but that family and locale grant various statuses, with urban living indicating a higher status than the village or the camp.[42] Material wealth, or money, has little to do with status in the West Bank, unlike the US where many of the

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a blind eye to their activities) to date, go to parties, school dances, and out with friends (Cainkar 1991). This means that Palestinian-American boys are much freer than their sisters to assume American identities.

girls' parents were able to insert themselves in the upper-middle class by virtue of their wealth, assets, and consumption habits. However, a word must also be said about the meaning and status of the peasantry in Palestine. The peasant has been used as a symbol of Palestinian nationalism since 1948, and especially since the late 1960s and 1970s. As Ted Swedenburg (1990, 20) makes clear, "The symbology associated with the peasantry therefore represents a form of digging in, a response to the deracinating thrust of the Zionist movement." This representation of the peasantry differs from its pre-1948 symbolic connotation, as "someone lower-class, backward, and uneducated" (Swedenburg 1990, 20). Outside of its symbology, however, village origins mean exactly these things in the eyes of Palestinian city-dwellers.

Language as a marker plays a role in the categorisation of American-Palestinian students who mostly only speak colloquial Arabic, and village dialects at that. Indeed, language was a highly sensitive issue amongst the girls I spoke to, who were almost all smarting from the local expectations that they should be fluent in Arabic. At the same time, their use of English marked them as being "American", and by extension, educated and cosmopolitan. Several of the girls spoke contemptuously of local Palestinian boys who would speak their "broken" English in order to attract their attention or impress them as they walked by them on the street. Despite their discomfort or inability to speak fluent Arabic, their use of English in local contexts also suggested arrogance to their Palestinian family and neighbours: "We are laughed at when we mispronounce an Arabic word, yet we are cursed at for being disrespectful if we speak English" (Hasan 1995, 95).

El-Yassir reported that Arabic language teachers at the Friends School, who often came from educated urban families, evaluated their American-Palestinian students' academic potential negatively as well as tended to "look down on" them because of their use of village dialect and their village origins, along with their more "American" attitudes and behaviours:

> No teacher thinks that they can achieve academically. And they think, "Well, the girls are all going to get married anyways." Especially the Arabic teachers. They have no time for them (Interview, Jerusalem, 8 October 1997).

Laila's reflections on the dynamics in her own family illustrates in what regard villagers and peasants are held. While both of her parents are from Jerusalem, her mother's family is *'Khalili'*,[43] reputed to be a less sophisticated, more peasant-like community. They are also of lower socio-economic class than her father's family. Laila claimed that her father's family never liked her

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[42] But this is also mediated by family origin. For instance, an important or well-respected village family can raise the status of a rural dweller, just as a family that is not well-known or respected will undercut the positive meaning of urban origins.

[43] Originally from el-Khalil (Hebron), seen as little more than a village, they moved to Jerusalem after 1948.

mother for these reasons ("they hate my mom"), and the fact that her mother is unrelated to the family while all of her paternal uncles married cousins meant that her mother was a "stranger" bride.[44] Laila remembered first realising her father's family's sentiments toward her mother when she lived in Jerusalem during her first grade year and was subjected to, along with her mother, their ridicule and contempt. Her father's response to his family's feelings about his wife might be what underlies his impatience with local jokes or disparaging comments about the *'Khalili'*, and about the *fallahin* (peasantry) and city-village differences. Laila's paternal grandmother is very city-conscious, and is proud of the blond hair and blue eyes in the family.[45] When Laila brought a friend (whose origins happened to be the village) home from school her grandmother could only say about her when she left, "She is so dark....she is so ugly." Dark skin is associated with the peasantry or the village.

Yet teachers at the Friends report that it is common to hear the American-Palestinian students "putting on" the village dialect, using the sound "ch" for the letter "ك", instead of "k" which is used in the Ramallah city and Jerusalem dialect. This "putting on" of the village dialect echoes Butler's (1990b, 337-8) characterization of "drag" as a gendered parody. The audience for, and the practitioners of, "drag", both know that the performer is not really a woman, but is playing at being one. Conversely, the performer is also saying that although his outside appearance may be masculine, their inside essence is female. In both cases these practices confound the audiences' tendencies to essentialise the identity of the performer. When American-Palestinian students use the "ch" they do it intentionally, as a confrontation of the fact that everyone around them knows that they are not "real" Palestinians, but only American versions. However, their "roots" are of the *fallahin*, the "real" Palestinians, and it is only historical accident that they were born in the US.

There is also another layer, to which Swedenburg's (1990) observations alert us. He claims that "[t]he 'authentic' rural culture is also widely regarded as a means of auto-inoculation against contaminating Western influences" (Swedenburg 1990, 24-5). Thus, in an arena where their "Palestinianness" is everywhere in question, and where they are ostracised because of their "Americanness", deploying their authentic Palestinian peasant background may be seen as an effort to stake a superior claim to "Palestinianness" than that of their local urban Palestinian counterparts. However, American-Palestinians and local Palestinians (who, at the Friends School, are almost all the children of the urban professional and business-owning middle classes)

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[44] See Granqvist (1931, 1935) for a discussion of the "stranger bride" in 1920s village life in Palestine. Additionally, Tucker (1993) offers a perspective on how the negotiation of gender relations varies by class by comparing upper-middle class and working-class patterns of marriage in Nablus and Cairo in the 19th century.

linguistically mark the tension of their difference from the *fallahin* and their identification with them. It is currently "hip" to use the term "ochay", a *fallahi* dialectical play on the English "ok", where the English usage marks their urban sophistication and cosmopolitanism, with the "ch" at once both undermining and highlighting this status.

Aisha reported playing with this class tension. A student at the Friends School, which must be remembered is traditionally an educational institution reserved for the Palestinian urban elite, she also lived in a village outside of Ramallah. Her immediate family attained upper-middle class status in the US:

> In Ramallah I am a "*fallaha*" (peasant), but in the village I bring out the "*madaniya*" (city-dweller). In the village they say, "Oh, she goes to the Friends"....I put on the city act to show them that the city isn't so bad.

Being "*madaniya*", or urban upper-middle class, gave Aisha privilege and status in her village, as Linda also indicated above. However, her peasant origins also gave her a claim to her "Palestinianness".

This claim to "Palestinianness" is especially important in light of the fact that most of the girls reported feeling, and being seen as, "American" in the West Bank. As one former student of the Friends School writes,

> From the day we arrive in Palestine, we begin a war for acceptance. In America, we fought to be recognized as Palestinians, yet once we've returned to Palestine, everyone refuses to recognize us as anything other than Americans. No matter how hard we struggle, it seems impossible to change the stereotypes we face as Palestinians from America....And, so begins another struggle. Aside from the traumatic change we've had to experience by leaving the country we grew up in, we're forced to return to a country where each day we have to fight in order to prove that we are as much Palestinians as everyone else born here, even if we do have passports[46] (Hasan 1995, 95).

Indicative of this were the girls' almost universal references to local Palestinians as "Arabs", in contra-distinction to their own identity as "Americans" (*cf.* Yamanaka 1996, 84-6). However, the antipathy between American-Palestinians and local Palestinians works both ways. Some of the difference American-Palestinians feel between themselves and their local counterparts is rooted

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[45] It is common in Palestine to associate dark complexions with *fallahin*, while lighter hair and skin are considered beautiful and more upper-class. See Muhawi and Kanaana (1989) for several examples of folktale representation of fairness as a sign of beauty.

[46] Palestinians frequently pointed to their passportless state to characterise their status as a people without citizenship. As possessors of passports, particularly American or western ones, American-Palestinians were the objects of envy of Palestinians in the West Bank. The passport is a symbol and a document of national entitlement, something Palestinians were deprived of, at least until very recently when the Palestinian passport was introduced. Yet the Palestinian passport does not guarantee entry into their country, and is subject to ultimate Israeli, rather than Palestinian, control. As such, the Palestinian passport is a poor symbolic and documentary version of nationhood and citizenship.

in their aversion to the local practices of same-sex hand-holding and other freely exchanged physical expressions of affection (Interview with Dina Abou-El-Haj, Ramallah, 25 April 1998). Of course, in the US same-sex physical expressions of affection are tainted by anti-homosexual and homophobic sentiments. Palestinian-Americans would have been fully socialised in this in their American middle and high school environments as well as through the US media. This aversion and resentment over their exclusion and marginalisation at the hands of local Palestinians feeds American-Palestinians' sense of "difference" in the West Bank, and is often expressed through their use of derogatory terms to label local Palestinians. Ironically, they are the same names that were directed at them in the US, and which they also use in reference to each other: "A-rab", "camel", "sand nigger", and so on. The varying nature of the uses of these terms only serves to demonstrate how important context is in our understanding of naming and language.[47]

Ally reported that while in the US her identity was ambiguous, or "different" from being mainstream American, in Palestine it was also problematic: "Here, we're 'American.'" Dina said, "I see my Americanness more here than there [in the US]." She added that she missed feeling "normal [as she did in the US]": "I'm always going to be 'American' here [in terms of language, attitudes, behaviour, etc.]."

Sometimes American-Palestinians try to maintain their sense of "normalcy" by attempting to retain modes of "American" behaviour and representation in Palestine. This is especially true of the boys, who in some ways have more opportunity and social leverage in which to do so. El-Yassir claimed that some American-Palestinian boys joined political factions during the*intifada* in the same way that they would have joined gangs in the US:[48]

> English-speaking [American-Palestinian] boys might have joined a political faction here for the same reasons they would join a gang at home....This gives them a sense of meaning and respect....they had a group to look after them....and if they got beat up [by Israeli soldiers] it really gave them credentials[49]....it definitely gave them a sense of belonging--they shared a common goal with Arabic-speaking [local Palestinian] boys.

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[47] For instance, the most recent debate in the US has been Quentin Tarantino's use of the term "nigga" in his latest movie, "Jackie Brown". Spike Lee, an African-American US film-maker has challenged the legitimacy of Tarantino's use of "nigga" on the basis that Tarantino is white. However, Tarantino's black/African-American cast who actually speak the word "nigga" in the film assert that it is culturally appropriate in terms of the film's characters, context, and storyline.

[48] This observation is not shared by Dina Abou-El-Haj, another former teacher at the school. She claims that while some American-Palestinian boys did get active in the *intifada* through party affiliation she does not agree that these would have been the same boys who would have been gang members in the US (Interview, Ramallah, 25 April 1998). However, the proliferation of identification with gangs in white American suburbs, as previously noted in this chapter, lends credence to el-Yassir's observation.

[49] See Peteet (1994) for an elaboration on this.

> Now that's not a possibility [joining a faction] and they have nothing in common...unless they join Hamas.[50]

Not only did political affiliation meet the social and emotional needs that American gang membership in the US had met previously, but it served the valuable function of granting them Palestinian credentials and belonging. This option, with the possible exception of membership with Hamas or Islamic Jihad, is no longer open to these boys. However, Siham Rashid Odeh, a former youth counsellor at an Arab-American community centre in Chicago, reported spotting TAP graffiti in Beitunia, a village adjacent to Ramallah. This was the work of some TAP members who had been brought back to the West Bank by their parents. Odeh encountered some of the youths that she had worked with in Chicago at one of the schools for American-Palestinians in the West Bank. One of the boys enthused to her about setting up a Palestinian chapter of TAP. Another told her that "It's just like it was back there [in Chicago], Miss." He reported to her that the male students at his school were forming gangs based on their American city of origin (Chicago, New York, Detroit, etc.), and signified this membership by wearing sports jerseys and caps associated with their cities. For instance, the Chicago gang wears Chicago Bulls gear, and so on. He told Odeh that there had been at least one gang-related stabbing at his school (Interview, Beit Hanina, 10 October 1997). There is no evidence that these American-based gangs have yet come into contact or conflict with Palestinian crime gangs.[51]

This development of US city-based gangs is interesting because of its resonance with Palestinian *hamula* identification. Of course, these boys, being almost literal strangers to their Palestinian homeland villages, do not identify with their Palestinian *hamayal.* The *hamula* denotes a kinship group situated in a particular locale, i.e. a village (Cohen 1965; Eickelman 1989, 155-6). However, gangs can be seen as pseudo-families, which are locale- and territory-based as well.

Aside from gang activity, American forms of identity are often displayed through clothing:

> In our neighborhoods and all over, they can spot us from a mile away. As soon as they see the baggy jeans, funny haircuts, and NIKE shoes, they know we're Americans and never let us forget it. As we walk along the streets of Ramallah, struggling to fit in, it never fails that we hear the whispers, "Oh, they're Americans" (Hasan 1995, 95).

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[50] Factional political street activity has come to an end in the post-Oslo era. The exceptions to this are the activities of Hamas and Islamic Jihad.

[51] These crime gangs are variants/extensions of political street factions. Even during the *intifada* it was widely known that some factional slivers were engaged in criminal activity such as burglary, drug trafficking, pimping, and car theft (Anonymous interview, Shuf'at, 29 July 1993). Although their origins may lie in political street activity, they do not have political credibility in the larger Palestinian community.

El-Yassir noted that this, too, is more often overtly deployed by the boys than by the girls, "because they're allowed to", and often manifests in a refusal to conform to school uniform.[52] "American" dress seems to frequently be consistent with rap fashion: baggy jeans and jerseys, stocking caps, baseball caps worn backwards, po' boy caps, hooded sweat-shirts. American-Palestinian girls tend to wear more fashionable clothing, makeup, and jewellery than their local Palestinian counterparts, but they also wore the baggy clothing made popular by rap musicians and culture in the US. Their propensity to wear fashionable clothing to school was in part, according to el-Yassir, because the American-Palestinian girls' only mixed-company venue is school, whereas, in comparison, Palestinian girls have more social outlets (Interview, Jerusalem, 8 October 1997).[53] Cindy defined her "Americanness" by the ways she dressed when she first arrived in the West Bank: "When I first came here everything was different from America: they way people dressed, the way people cooked, the buildings, everything....I had my Americanised ways then--the way I dressed, the way I did my hair." Unless attired in "Muslim dress", the girls I spoke to all wore American brand-name or designer-label clothing, or clothing associated with a particular American sub-culture, and desired to go to the US to buy clothes. When this was not a viable alternative, they tended to go on shopping trips to Tel Aviv or the large Jerusalem Mall in West Jerusalem where American imports are available. In her interviews with me, Laila went so far as to ridicule one of her classmates who had taken to wearing the local "Crocker" brand of jeans. She made it clear that this classmate's claim to coolness was undermined by his new fashion choice. Despite the fact that American-Palestinian students complained about being constantly identified as "American" by local Palestinians, and knew that their dress was a marker for this identity, they persisted in adhering to American rather than Palestinian styles of dress adopted by their local peers. Local alternative choices of dress range from the more "faddish" and European-influenced styles adopted by their local counterparts or the more adult, tailored, and expensive clothing worn by the urban upper-middle class. Neither of these options appeal to American teenage sensibilities. Additionally, because their dress is decidedly casual, it does not signal to local Palestinians their membership to the American urban upper-middle class, something that might garner them more local respect. Instead, only their village origins are emphasised.[54]

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[52] At the Friends Schools, conforming to the uniform meant wearing only blue and white clothing, and the girls were required to wear loose navy blue sleeveless smocks or "aprons", that tied back to front on each side, over their clothing. This effectively hid from view the outline of their hips and breasts. The girls hated wearing these aprons, and I noticed that most of the girls left the ties untied on each side, leaving the backs and fronts of the apron to hang loosely and flap. A former teacher at the school disparagingly referred to the aprons as "infantilising". From my observations, none of the other schools for American-Palestinian students seemed to have uniform regulations for their male students, unless the boys utterly disregarded what rules there were in this regard, and not all of these schools seemed to require girls to wear aprons, unless they, too, were consistently breaking the uniform rules.

[53] This difference will be elaborated in more detail in the following chapter.

[54] I will return to the issue of dress and its relation to modesty and "westernness" in the next chapter.

Particular behaviours and attitudes were also defined by the girls and those around them as "American". Aisha's paternal grandmother used to call her "the American" whenever she would attempt to insist on her rights. Aisha is known as *qawiya* ("strong-willed") in her family. Alia said that she is still "American" enough to feel that "as long as I'm comfortable and know that I'm not doing something wrong, I don't care what people say." This is what she called the American side of herself. Dalal said that she feels American in Palestine. She expects respect from her elders and believes in "going after" what she wants, which she and her family and neighbours associated with being American. Alia definitely felt more American than Palestinian: "When I compare myself to girls here I feel so American.... I feel like an American who became Muslim." Finally, Linda was "proud of being different", "proud of knowing English here", and "proud of having an open mind and of believing in women's rights." All of these things, she felt, defined her as American.

Sometimes being "American" provided a measure of social freedom for the girls, particularly the older ones. For instance, the first time Amal had to deal with a "conservative mentality" on a regular basis was when she taught at a private school for American-Palestinians:

> They [the teachers and administration] could see that I was different, but not in the way they thought I was different [i.e. she was American, but moral]....They would say, "Oh, she's American."

This "Americanness", apparently, was used by the teachers and administration to explain to themselves how Amal was not conservative, it excused her. Likewise for Riham, who also felt very "American" in the West Bank, where, she said, people could tell that she was American just by looking at her (her clothes, the way she held herself, the way she walked). But this "Americanness" was also present in the way she dealt with people: she felt that she was more "practical", efficient, "open", and she didn't allow convention, tradition, or culture to override this. For instance, Riham would not eat other people's food when she didn't feel like it or want it (even when pressed), she only visited others when she felt like it and refused to do so when she didn't, she would not allow her aunt to clean her apartment when she had guests (which also indicated that she did not maintain local standards of neatness and cleanliness, which are extremely stringent), and she would not allow her grandmother cook for her.[55] Her family and friends could only justify and attribute her behaviour and attitudes to her "Americanness." Indeed, there was no other acceptable excuse for this trampling on local sensibilities. The earlier example of Laila's ability to dress as a headbanger in the West Bank can also be partly attributed to her status as an American.

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[55] See Tapper and Zubaida (1994, 11-13) and Maclagan (1994) for discussions of the meaning of food in the Middle East and its associations with gender and honour, and Muhawi and Kanaana (1989, 37-40) for a discussion of food's import to the establishment, maintenance, and strengthening of family bonds.

Some of the girls were mystified as to how strangers knew that they were American, and attributed it to subtleties about their appearance and body movements:

> There must have been some difference about me...for...when I walked down the street I would hear the murmurs: *ajnabi*, foreigner. Even my body language marked me. When I was in my teens an Arab man once told me he would recognize my walk from blocks away. "You don't walk like an Arab girl," he said. "You take long steps; there's a bounce to your stride" (Majaj 1994, 75).

Nancy told me that she and her sisters used to hear continually on the street, "Oh, they're American." She said that American-Palestinians are identified not so much by what they wear, but by their "attitude". Nancy says that American-Palestinian girls don't look away as they approach men on the street, the men and boys walk with a swagger, and the girls walk with more "confidence" than their local Palestinian counterparts. Dalal reported that everyone knows that she's American by the way she looks, especially her clothes (baggy clothing, jerseys, etc.). Ally explained, "They [local Palestinians] can tell [American-Palestinians] by the way they dress and how they hold themselves."

There is also a sexual element to American identities as popularly defined by Palestinians, or at least by Palestinians the girls encountered on a day-to-day basis, particularly Palestinian men. As Majaj (1994, 76) remembers,

> I see now how orientalist representations of the Arab world find echoes in occidentalist perceptions of the west. When I walked down the streets of Amman I was categorized as foreign, female; a target of curiosity and harassment. My appearance alone in public and my foreignness seemed to suggest sexual availability; whispers of *charmoota*, prostitute, echoed in my burning ears.

Dalal put it in a "nutshell":

> When I first got here people saw me as an American. I said to them, "I'm Palestinian just like you--we have the same blood." They [Palestinians] have this view that everyone from America has money and that the girls are all sluts.

Dalal also differentiated American-Palestinian boys and men from their local Palestinian counterparts: "guys from here say 'perverted' things as girls walk by--the guys from the US don't." Ally echoed Dalal when she told me that her mother told her not to speak English on the street or in stores because she doesn't want to give away that they're from America: "If they know you're from America, there go the prices....plus if you talk American [*sic*], the guys follow you."

More often, however, the girls included this sexual element of perceived American identity in other, more detailed reflections of what it meant to be "American" in Palestine. Both Cindy and

Aisha believed that there were both positive and negative aspects to their American identity in Palestine. Cindy believed that, more than anything else, it elevated her status:

> People respected me more because I was an American...you know, the land of freedom, the land of money....I heard those words ["*Americaniya*"] a lot when I first came here....they still call me that....It feels good. It's true. I am American....It makes me feel special and unique. It's not everyone they call "American"....It [to be called "American"] means she's different. She knows things. She's been places they've never been to and seen things they've never seen. They know another language. Most Arabs here dream of going to America....Some people, when they say "American" mean it in a different way. They mean all the bad stuff. That she's gone out with a boy. All the bad stuff you can imagine like that.

For Aisha, being "American" meant a multitude of things, including being an outsider and sexually available. However, like Cindy, Aisha also believed that some Palestinians put a positive value on being American:

> "American" can mean may things--it just depends on where you are. It could depend on the papers you carry. Or the language you prefer to speak. It usually means *gharib* (foreigner) [*sic*], as though you don't belong. If you speak Arabic with an accent, people will think you were brought up somewhere else, which to some people will be defined as "American".
>
> Among some people, I believe they think it's exciting. They'll speak to you in broken English, despite the fact that you may respond in Arabic. They fail to realize that I can speak and respond to them. Most of the time I don't mind, but when male shop owners do it, it frustrates me, because they think they're so cool, and it's annoying.
>
> Something I don't understand is sometimes when I enter a store or a taxi, and have yet to say anything, people assume that I'm American. I have brown skin, brown eyes, and black hair. I *look* Arabic. I don't know how else to say it. I walk down the streets and I see girls who could look like me, so how come they don't get harassed for being "American". If truth be known, those girls on the streets want to be recognized as American more than I.

Of interest here is Aisha's choice of the word "*gharib*" to denote "foreigner. No doubt this is the word she heard applied to herself. However, *gharib* properly means "stranger", and is related to *mughtarib*, which refers to emigrants typically moved west, such as Aisha's parents. For instance, one of the central squares in Ramallah's downtown area is called *Maidan al-Mughtaribin* (Square of the Emigrants).[56] Note also that Aisha makes a claim to a greater "Palestinianness" than her local Palestinian counterparts, illustrating the contradictions that many of the girls feel between their "stranger" or "foreign" status and their at least partial desire to belong, or to be recognized as belonging, in the West Bank, as well as their perception that they uphold what they believe are Palestinian standards of comportment more rigidly than their local counterparts.

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[56] In this context, *mughtaribin* seems to refer to emigrants who migrated west, or to western countries, given the notable rate of Ramallan migration to the US and the meaning of *gharb* (west). I am grateful to Ibrahim Diabes who clarified these matters for me (Personal communication, Ramallah, 1 May 1998).

Dina has a hard time identifying the ways in which she might be recognized as American:[57]

> That's a hard question. I mean, there are physical signs of my being American: the passport, maybe my clothes or style, the books and magazines lying around in my room that are in English and American. But then again, after living in America for a certain amount of years any non-citizen can become a citizen. Style and clothes do not have to be from someone from a certain country. And whoever reads English could have a number of things lying around in that language. So I guess the thing that distinguish me most are my ideas and thoughts. I do a lot of things for myself over here, not for other people. It doesn't mean that I don't care what people think (most of the time), but it doesn't stop me from doing something I want to do, or make me do something I don't want to do. I don't really get into people's lives as much over here. If someone I was talking to started talking about someone I didn't know or didn't care to know, then I wouldn't really pay attention. I don't care about the latest wedding or gossip, but then again, now that I think about it, there are plenty of "Americans" that do care. So now what's the difference?
>
> I have no idea how someone who doesn't know me, but sees me walking in the streets of Ramallah and decides to "flirt" with me knows that I'm American. It annoys the hell out of me when they walk up and say something stupid like, "Beautiful", or "Hello, thank you." Come on, wouldn't it annoy you?

Dina cannot come up with characteristics that clearly define her as "American". While she mentioned many of the same elements of identity that other girls did (English-speaking, clothes and "style", independent thinking), she also makes clear that local Palestinian girls can also acquire these characteristics. It is only the perceived sexual availability that seems to distinguish her.

These examples of how girls saw the meaning of their American identity in the West Bank illustrates the contradictions inherent in their "Americanness" in Palestine. On the one hand, to be "American" means to be open-minded and independent, to have a broad life experience, and to believe in women's rights. On the other hand, to be "American" means to be wealthy and thus vulnerable to exploitation, to be a cultural outsider, and to be sexually available if one is a girl. While all of the girls were eager to claim the positive traits associated with being American, none wanted to be seen as "loose" and few wanted to be perceived as someone who didn't belong or have a claim to being Palestinian. Most of the girls, because they were compelled to comport themselves as "Palestinian", believed that this legitimised their claim to "Palestinianness". Yet it is precisely because American-Palestinian girls saw themselves as indistinguishable from their local Palestinian counterparts, if not even more "Palestinian" in that they believed that they practised the rules of modest comportment more strictly than their local counterparts;[58] that they

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[57] As mentioned in my methodological account in chapter one, I provided the girls with a written account of our discussions at the conclusion of our interview schedule. These accounts were sectioned into themes, and each section was headed by a sample of general questions to remind the girls of the issues involved. These are the questions that I am referring to in the text and that Dina "struggled" to answer.

[58] To be "Palestinian" in the Palestinian-American context, as is discussed in chapter four, frequently demands blameless and upright sexual comportment.

were frustrated by the perception of their sexual availability. Several of the girls contrasted their "pure" comportment to that of the "Arab" girls.

Cindy, in our discussion of American and Palestinian identities, commented:

> I wouldn't do all the bad stuff they [local Palestinian girls] would do. People probably thought, "She's American. She'll do all the stuff they do." And when they saw me, I was normal.

Lana was shocked at the sexual comportment of local girls: "Some of those Arab girls are bad, really bad....I was so surprised [when I first moved here and realized it]."

However, it was the American-Palestinian girls who felt that they were constantly scrutinised for signs of behaviour in which they believed only their local Palestinian counterparts indulged. One American-Palestinian girl recalls her experiences growing up in Amman:

> On constant trial to prove my virtue and held to a far stricter standard of behavior than my Arab cousins, I both resented and felt compelled to undertake the ongoing task of proving that I wasn't, in fact, American (Majaj 1994, 79).

The perception of their sexual experience and availability stood in sharp contrast to their actual lived realities both in the US and in the West Bank, where they were held to high standards of behaviour and proper sexual comportment defined by ideals of family "honour". Ally was angry about the double standard applied to Palestinian girls from the US and girls born and raised in Palestine:

> I get mad. We're trying so hard to do everything right....We're from America and everyone is looking at us like we're bad. But the girls here are allowed to do anything.

Khadija also noted the less stringent expectations and controls on the comportment and behaviour of local Palestinian girls:

> The ones who are born here, they figure they know, they're born here, they're perfect....When a girl from America goes out they're all looking, "Where's she going?" But a girl from here, they don't pay any attention.

Even if not under scrutiny, many of the girls felt that they had to conceal parts of themselves or their knowledge, particularly as it pertained to sexual matters, in order to maintain their reputations and also to be accepted by local Palestinian girls. Alia told me about an incident that took place at her university dorm where her dorm-mates were discussing sexual matters, but were obviously misinformed. Alia did not feel at liberty to enlighten them as she was certain they would misconstrue her source of knowledge, especially because she is American, as practical experience

rather than access to US high school health classes. Nancy also reported that she has social difficulties on this and other issues:

> I'm in a real rough spot socially....I'm an oddball here. The other unmarried women [in my place of work] are nice but we don't really have anything in common. I consider them to be really naive, and they're really giggly when I don't see anything to be giggly about. Some of the things they think [about men and sex] are wrong....but I don't want them to know that I know that they're wrong [to protect her reputation].

Nancy hastened to assure me that she gained this information not through experience, but "because I learned about all that in health classes [in her American high school]." Aside from the sexual knowledge gap, then, it is clear that there were also cultural gaps in understanding that the girls found difficult to bridge.[59]

Apart from the pressures from sexual harassment and attention she was subject to on the streets, Nancy and her sisters chafed under the dour local standards of public comportment:

> My sisters and I are the smiling type and we like to laugh a lot when we're together....But here when people see us laughing in public they say a saying that means, "May you laugh without teeth"--it means, "What do you have to laugh about when others are unhappy or unfortunate?"

Despite the fact that Lana had been living in the West Bank for five years, she still didn't feel that she completely fit in:

> Sometimes they [local Palestinians] make you feel like such an oddball. The moment I open my mouth and speak Arabic they know I'm from America....but I've been here for such a long time it doesn't matter [Lana didn't care about being called "American" and felt that the negative stereotypes attached to the label no longer affect her because she had lived in the West Bank for several years].

Lana, along with many other American-Palestinian girls, was angry and frustrated with local Palestinians judging her Arabic. But it is more than just a language issue:

> When I'm with pure Arabs [local Palestinians] I feel like I don't fit in. It's not that I don't want to be with them, it's just that we have nothing in common.

I asked Alia about the differences between American girls, who she characterized as strong, capable, and fearless, and Palestinian girls, who she characterized as passive, afraid to try new things, and trying hard to please others (she added about this last, "this is a trait I have too"). During the *e'id* her father bought the family a punching bag at her request. However, judging by the reactions of her female neighbours in her village, this was an unfeminine gift, and to use it is

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[59] Bentley (1987) convincingly uses Bourdieu's (1977) notion of "habitus" to explain this kind of affective disjuncture by using a case study of a Maranao woman with a sense of "ambivalent ethnicity".

unfeminine behaviour: "It's not feminine to have muscles." Being a natural athlete, Alia stood out in sharp contrast to her local Palestinian counterparts who are often discouraged, or even forbidden, to engage in strenuous physical activities (Manasra 1993).

However, as has already been indicated, the girls not only defined themselves, or were defined by others, as "American", but also took up and were attributed Palestinian identities as well. Sometimes this happened in contradiction to their American identity. For instance, Dina recalled a prior visit to her parents' Palestinian village in 1991, during the *intifada.* During the visit there were several incidents with Israeli soldiers. One night the soldiers rounded up all of the men of the village, including her father, and held them outside for several hours. Another time her father was jailed by the soldiers for three days because he broke curfew. These two incidents pierced the sense of invulnerability she had held as an American citizen, and as part of a family of American passport-holders. It was clear that American citizenship meant nothing to the IDF. They were Palestinians in Israeli eyes, and therefore anything could be done to them.

Amal pointed to an incident of Israeli persecution as a defining moment of her Palestinian identity. "The first time I remember coming [to Palestine]", says Amal, was when she was 9 years old. She and her family, who were all Jordanian passport-holders, except her American-born youngest sister, were entering the West Bank through the Allenby/King Hussein Bridge. Her sister had a gold chain with a pendant in the shape of the Palestinian map with *'Filastin'* ("Palestine") engraved on it in Arabic. The Israeli soldiers wouldn't let them through passport control because of this. Amal's family returned to the crossing four times before they were let in, and during those times Amal realized that the Israelis were also harassing and troubling many other Palestinians trying to cross the border. She said that she didn't completely understand; all they wanted to do was to go to Palestine and see her grandmother, but

> for the first time I understood why we were going to all those Palestinian parties....I was angry because you have no control....they make you feel like you're nothing.

This, she says, was her first "initiation" into being Palestinian.

Dina pointed to the social and political powerlessness that she experienced as a Palestinian girl as a defining feature of living as a Palestinian:

> here you're forced to do something or there's no choice....[For example], like I have to depend on my parents a lot. I really hate that now that I'm 18. I would love to get a job. But I need one for an 18 year old American girl who doesn't speak Arabic very well, but is fluent in English!
>
> But it's not just my parents that have this huge influence over my life, but also the occupation. I mean, there are days when you can't go to college [because of IDF closures and checkpoints] because of some kind of trouble going on between the Israelis

> and the Palestinians. Even a couple of years ago, I could frequent Jerusalem as many times as I wanted. Now, if you don't have a [tourist or residence] visa (which I don't), it's really difficult to get in, especially if one of those "Mid-East problems" are taking place or just took place.

Yet, some of the girls also indicated that living as a Palestinian has been a maturing, if difficult, but defining epoch in their lives. The taking up of Palestinian identity[60] was an attractive strategic option for many girls. Not only did nationalist sentiments take over in these girls' representations of themselves as Palestinian, but as we will see in chapter five, this option may have been one of the few available to them as a means of maintaining the concrete acting out of "American" fantasies of themselves. Whatever their motivation, Palestinian identity served to contradict the negative values attached to being American and female, and thus also served to ease their day-to-day existences in the West Bank. For Nadia, her move to Palestine freed her of an Americanness that sat on her uncomfortably:

> People don't call me "Arabic" here, they call me "the American girl"....[but] I feel that I'm probably more "Palestinian" than a lot of the [local] girls here....[because] the majority of the "Arab" girls just want to get out of here and never come back. [Nadia felt that she was] more cultural [*sic*] than them [local Palestinian girls]....I feel like I'm from here....I don't want to go back [to the US]....I don't know what they're all complaining about [other returnee girls]....I really like it here, even though I don't have as many freedoms here, I feel for my country....I don't feel "American"....even there [in the US] I was always proud [to be Palestinian]....My future, I want it here....because this is where I came from. This is my blood....and besides, I'm more relaxed here....I don't feel pressure. I always felt pressure in America with my friends to do things that I couldn't do.

Here we see her favourable self-comparison to local Palestinian girls, as well as to her American-Palestinian counterparts. Nonetheless, nationalist sentiment also played a role in Nadia's uptake of "Palestinianness", as it did in the US.

Nationalism played a greater role in Amal's assumption of her Palestinian identity. After a visit in the summer of 1987, before the onset of the *intifada*, Amal returned in 1990 after finishing high school. She lived with her maternal aunt and grandmother in Ramallah, and became socially and politically active by participating in a local cultural community centre and becoming involved in the political and cultural life of the *intifada*:

> After seeing it [the *intifada*] all these years on TV and worrying about friends and family here....it was emotionally draining....and when I finally got here it felt like I had to be a part of it. I had to start learning how to throw stones.

Aisha, whose experience was less exhilarating, but no less important, said to me:

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[60] Or "Muslim" identity, as we will see in chapter five.

> I started living when I came here....When I came here I began seeing the world. [But life was extremely difficult for her during the *intifada* years]....during the *intifada*, kids weren't allowed to be kids.

This political experience has made both Aisha and Amal strongly identify as Palestinians. Nancy, too, told of similar experiences. She said that their return in 1992 allowed she and her siblings to feel positively about their "Palestinianness": "We got to see some of the*intifada* and this made us proud." She added,

> It was only after coming here that we became proud of what we were. We get really mad when people say, "Oh, you're American", and we say, "No. We're as Palestinian as you are."

For the first time, Nancy said, they were proud to declare their "Palestinianness." And, just as we saw in the American context where migrants tend to strive to identify with the dominant social group, we see Nancy and her siblings doing the same in Palestine. However, the attractiveness of this option is contingent on other factors, as can be read in one of Aisha's stories.

One time, Aisha recounted to me, she went to Tel Aviv with some friends, who all wanted to be "American" for the day by only speaking English. But Aisha refused:

> In Israel I spoke Arabic....I love being Palestinian....I'm proud of being Arab....I'm proud of our struggles.

In this act, which can be read as political defiance, Aisha was choosing her Palestinian identity over her American one in a situation where being American is infinitely easier than being Palestinian. To deploy her "Americanness" in this instance would have been a political betrayal of her people and of her fantasies of herself as "Palestinian". Indeed, although Aisha expressed that she fully embraced a Palestinian identity, she also indicated that this identity position is contested. There is also a partially spoken contradiction/tension between her Palestinian identity, which she "feels" and "believes" in, and her American identity, which by implication she acts out:

> In Palestine I am referred to as "American". In America I'm referred to as "Palestinian". You choose? I feel and believe I'm Palestinian, but not everyone will say I act it, although they'll never say that I'm American.

Aisha herself said of the US, "I do not like America much, only some of the things it represents [individual rights, freedom, democracy]."

Dina, too, expressed ambiguity over her identity, and in the end, indicated that she rejects both positions. Instead, she chose an identity based on her sense of her "real" self:

> Sometimes I don't think of myself as Arab or Arab-American, but just as "Dina". That's when I have no outside pressure on me.

While Amal felt a "difference" between herself and other Palestinian-Americans, she found a social niche for herself amongst the young leftist crowd in Ramallah:

> Most of my friends are Palestinian from here [Palestine]....because Palestinian-American girls--my situation bothers them....the girls at the school [where she taught] didn't understand how I could do all these things, like dancing with [a local dance troupe], going to meetings, hanging out at [local restaurants]...and still have a good reputation.

Like Aisha who distanced herself from being "American" and identified with being "Palestinian", Amal differentiated herself from other Palestinian-Americans who have come to the West Bank to live. She characterized her move to the West Bank as a search for a more authentic "Palestinian" identity:

> I speak Arabic and so there's less of a barrier when I'm first introduced to anyone....I can act like a Palestinian, and I can talk like a Palestinian, and I can dance *dabka* like a Palestinian....These girls [other American-Palestinians], all they were taught was how to be Muslims, and not very good Muslims at that. They're taught honour and shame and all that....they're taught deformed customs and broken language....[by using my Palestinian language and behaviour it] makes it easier for them [local Palestinians] not to see me as "American". I'm not coming here to show off that I can speak another language. I'm not coming here to show off my new jeans. No, I'm coming here to live.

Not only did Amal make much effort to be Palestinian in the same way that locals are "Palestinian", she also took up her Palestinian identity to the extent where she applied for and received the *hawiyya* (identity card),[61] issued by the Palestinians on behalf of the Israelis in accordance with the Oslo Accords:

> I got my Palestinian *hawiyya* and I wonder how good an idea it is....as far as living in Ramallah, it's easier [but]....the thing that gets me is the restriction on travel. You don't know how difficult it is to wonder if you'll get permission [from the Israelis] to go to the airport....you have no idea how it feels to not be able to move, to travel, until it happens to you....the *hawiyya*, it puts blocks around you at every turn. [62]

As Amal made clear, getting her *hawiyya* was not simply a matter of convenience,[63] but also one of identity:

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[61] Amal was able to get a *hawiyya* because her father works for the PNA, otherwise she would have had to have been resident in Palestine for four years in order to be eligible.

[62] West Bank and Gaza Palestinians need to acquire a permit from the IDF occupation authorities in order to cross into Israel. This includes travel to the airport.

[63] Without the *hawiyya* she would either have to reside in the West Bank illegally, or renew her Israeli tourist visa in her American passport every three months.

> I guess for my father [who also has one] and I it was a symbolic thing, the Palestinian passport....I used to come here as an American citizen and it used to drive me crazy, to not be here as a Palestinian....At least now, I'm here as a Palestinian.

Nonetheless, Amal noted that she doesn't fit into the mainstream of either Palestinian or American society:

> I've been able to take both cultures in. But not completely--even my Palestinian life is limited....my social circle is made up of one segment of society--they're open-minded, educated....This is where my "differentness" comes: not in being "Palestinian" or in being "American", but in being a particular type of person....in being politically active [against injustice]...and in being socially active and culturally active.

This, in fact, played no small part in her relocation to Palestine. Her sister remarked to her as she was preparing to move, "Well, you never really belonged here [in the US]. Maybe you'll find yourself there."

But for most of the girls neither American identity nor Palestinian identity sat comfortably on them in the West Bank. As I have already outlined, being "American" is associated in the West Bank with sexual availability and with wealth, but their Palestinian origins also relegate them to the status of *fallaha*, peasant girl. This rural status stands at great odds with their American urban middle- and upper-middle class backgrounds. Moreover, while urban middle- and upper-middle class Palestinians tend to look disparagingly upon American-Palestinian returnees, villagers, and peasants, they aspire to and sometimes emulate the consumer lifestyle of the American middle- and upper-middle classes. In the post-Oslo Accords era, conspicuous consumption for those who can afford it is in fashion. Ironically, American-Palestinian returnees and their children, with their greater exposure to and experience of American cultural codes, can easily spot "errors" in style or un-hip tastes (by American standards). For instance, wearing too-tight clothing and platform shoes, while risqué or modern in the West Bank, is only seen as "cheap", "trashy", or ugly by American-Palestinian girls. Likewise badly bleached hair. A professed liking for Celine Dion is decidedly uncool. Perhaps most vulnerable to American-Palestinian teenage condescension are those Palestinians who are unreservedly eager to uncritically embrace items of American or western music, fashion, or other items of consumption, those who brag about their possession of these items, or who profess great knowledge of American or western style. Thus, while American-Palestinians are perceived as "backwards", "traditional", or "conservative" by their urban middle- and upper-middle local counterparts, American-Palestinians see these counterparts as gauche and inexperienced.

This leaves American-Palestinian returnees in the uncomfortable position of identifying more closely with Israelis. While also imperfect in their adoption of American style, Israelis are seen to be confident and discriminating in their consumption, more expertly familiar with American

styles, and able to make stylish adaptations of them. The one exception to American-Palestinian identification with Israeli style and use of American style is the dress of young Israeli women which is popularly considered sluttish and tastelessly revealing. The fact that Tel Aviv and West Jerusalem more closely resemble the American cities these girls grew up in lends credence to the Israelis' superior grasp of American style. Ironically, a trip to the West Jerusalem shopping mall feels much more like going "home" to American-Palestinian girls than does living in their parents' West Bank villages. Besides, shopping malls, American chain stores and restaurants, and other shops carrying American and American-style consumer goods are everywhere in Israel and almost entirely absent in the West Bank (with groceries carrying American imports and a few American-Palestinian owned minor fast food franchises being almost the only exceptions). American-Palestinian boys commonly frequent the bars and clubs on the "west-side", and American-Palestinian girls prefer to do most of their clothes shopping there. As we saw in Dalal's comment earlier, it is easier for American-Palestinian girls to relate to the Israeli lifestyle than the way of life in their villages.

I have discussed this issue at length in order to frame a final, albeit unusual, example of an American-Palestinian girl deploying an "ethnic option". Laila desperately wanted to return to the US for her university education, but her parents would not permit it. Instead, knowing that Birzeit University did not have the academic offerings suitable for their daughter, they enrolled her at an Israeli university where she began to live on campus in a dormitory. The program Laila was enrolled in was mandatory for all freshman non-Israeli, primarily Jewish American, students studying at the university to gain exposure to Israeli life and Jewish culture. Laila told me that when she first moved into her dormitory she encountered a right-wing Zionist American female student who raved about how the Arabs were scum, dirty, and how she wanted to kill them. Laila said that there were several of these types in her class. Upon meeting her, the Zionist girl said to Laila that she didn't look Jewish. Laila responded that her mother was from Jerusalem, to which the girl responded, "Oh, you're Israeli." Laila let this pass, and soon everyone thought that she was Jewish and Israeli. She began taking Hebrew as well as Torah studies, and maintained some of the highest grades in her classes. While most of her Jewish American classmates had a previous knowledge of written and spoken Hebrew, Laila had none. Ironically, it was her knowledge of Arabic (which is similar to Hebrew) that helped her. I was astounded at her ability to convincingly pull this stunt off, and asked her how she did it. She replied that if her new friends were Israeli she would never have been able to maintain the fiction, but because they were American and "didn't know anything" she was able to keep them convinced.

Symptomatic of her changing perceptions of Palestinians and "Jews" or Israelis, Laila said to me that this girl's definition of her as an Israeli wasn't actually a lie, that she*was* Israeli, referring to her parents' status as Jerusalemites. It is here that Laila's identity investments become very

complex. Laila's "passing" as a Jew came on the heels of a summer of conflict with her father, who insisted that she speak Arabic, and who taunted her about being American: "Oh, so you think you're American. You think you're too good. Well I'll tell you, you'd be lucky if an Arab wanted to marry you." This last statement was in reaction to Laila's insistence that she wasn't going to marry an "Arab", American or otherwise.

About her "passing" Laila explained,

> I think the real reason I'm doing this is to get back at my father. They want me to be proud of my heritage and culture and then they send me here [to an Israeli university]. It doesn't make any sense. Why can't I go to the States? What have I done to them? I'm not like them and I'll never be like them. I don't care what I wear. I don't care what my neighbours do. I don't talk about people behind their backs. I have a life.

Laila's perceptions of Palestinians were also changing:

> I see things differently now. I believe that the Jews have a right to live here, just like everyone else does. This is the holy land....Before, in the States I believed my father when he told me that the Arabs could do no wrong. In the States I was proud to be Palestinian. But then I got here and saw what they're really like....And then I came here [the Israeli university] and the Arab guys are perverted and they come to class smelling. There's some truth to what they [Israelis/Jews] say.

One of Laila's friends in the dorm, she said, was almost raped by a Palestinian in Nazareth: "How can I be proud of that?"

In her milieu at university Laila faced a problem with identification with Palestinians in another way as well. The vast majority of her class-mates only had contact with lower- and working-class Palestinians working in Israel in the service, construction, and maintenance sectors. There were also some male Palestinian students in her class. However, according to Laila, these Palestinian men saw Israeli and western women as legitimate sexual targets, and were often guilty of sexual harassment on the streets or crude attempts at sexual seduction (see Bowman 1989; Nader 1989). On campus, and in the bars and clubs that Laila and her friends would frequent, they often met Palestinians who attempted to pick them up. Laila was disgusted with these men, especially since she understood what they were saying in Arabic to and about women. She explained that she was evaluating these men by the criteria of their own society, where they're considered "scum" (involved in drugs and harassing/seducing women), and had no desire to be associated with them, either as friends on campus or as co-nationals in general.

Laila's taking up of Israeli identity can be read in many ways: as a bid to survive in a hostile campus environment; as a refusal of "Palestinianness" and of her parents; as a claim to her American identity through various sets of social practices and relations. Laila could not seem to find a way to be both American and Palestinian, and so having to "choose" or invest, she

consistently chose American ways of being. Indeed, when I met Laila on campus for the first time after her enrolment I was struck by her changed appearance. No longer dressed in black and her usual headbanger gear, she had adopted the "grunge" look that was emulative of Seattle-style "grunge" bands such as Nirvana, the alternative music of choice on US campuses. No doubt this was the style current with her new American friends.

Some of her closest friends on campus, who maintained a liberal and critical (of Israel) stance on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, unaware of her Palestinian identity, accused Laila of racism because of her attitude towards Palestinians. They had observed her behaviour toward the Palestinian men and boys on campus and in the clubs they drank and danced in, and had heard her disparaging remarks about them. It was because of this that Laila told her closest friends that she was Palestinian. In fact, what she told them was that her mother was Israeli and that her father was a Christian Palestinian. This, she hoped, was an acceptable version of her identity and would help them to understand her position, as well as alleviate some of the pressure of "passing". While she initially attended Torah class and had access to Jewish-only events, as a Palestinian she was no longer able to participate in these activities.

There was a risk that she faced as she revealed her true nationality to her friends, as she was concerned that this information didn't reach the wider community on campus. If it did, her Arab classmates and the Palestinian maintenance staff on campus would "watch" her, resulting in a loss of freedom and anonymity. She was particularly concerned that stories about her doings on and off campus did not reach her family or her Palestinian community. For this reason she wanted her friends to keep her Palestinian identity a secret.

This freedom was crucial to Laila, who said that

> I've picked up where I left off when I left the States. I've really grown. I have to cook and clean for myself in my dorm. I'm living now. I'm finally happy after two years. I'm free [to laugh, wear what I want, do what I want]. It's just like being back in the States, and I have all American friends....I'm known around for having a strong personality....I'm known to be "the feminist" on campus.

The decision to send her to an Israeli university infuriated Laila. "They want me to be proud of being Palestinian, and then they send me *here*", she complained to me. I could see her point. Rebelling against her parents' decision she made the ultimate refusal of "Palestinianness": she adopted a Jewish Israeli identity. But this was not only a defiant expression against her parents, it was also a survival tactic on a potentially hostile campus and a reclamation of a version of "Americanness" that seemed also to be consistent with being an adult and having social freedom, things she was denied as an unmarried Palestinian girl in the West Bank. Ironically, this

particular version of "Americanness", Jewish and Israeli, was an identity that provided her with the means to feel herself again.

## Reflections on and lessons learned from the being of "American" and "Palestinian" in the US and in the West Bank

Ethnic, racial, and religious identities can be deployed strategically as "identity options". This chapter has elaborated upon several of the ways of being I identified during the course of my research that are practised by Palestinian-Americans. However, as the material indicates, tactical identity deployment and representation is contingent on class, locale, context, and gender. In the US, xenophobic representations of and reactions against Arabs (particularly Palestinians), Arab racial invisibility, the varying status of Islam according to generation, race, and subculture, along with Palestinian-Americans' own varying class positions, meant that the girls I interviewed chose from a number of identity options. This does not mean that every identity option was open or attractive to every girl. Rather, Palestinian-American girls are varyingly situated according to class, race, and ethnicity in the US, allowing for a range of identity deployments contingent on this positioning.

In Palestine, girls mostly found American identity thrust upon them. Being "American" in the West Bank can mean a variety of things, including privilege, wealth, independent thinking, wide and various cosmopolitan experience, and (erroneously, in the cases of the girls I spoke to) sexual availability. By implication, because it is well known in the West Bank that Palestinians who migrated to the US are mostly from villages in the Ramallah area, being American-Palestinian also meant peasant origins, with all of the negative and contradictory connotations being *fallahi* holds. Some of the girls chose to deploy these identities positively and strategically. In other cases, being witness to or participating in the *intifada* bought the girls Palestinian credentials. Nonetheless, none of the girls expressed full identification with being Palestinian, either because they were unable to "fit in" or because they were not accepted as such. Many were angered and frustrated by the sexual connotations of being American, especially since it contradicted their lived experiences and seemed more consistent with their observations of "Arab" girls' sexual comportment.

In the following chapter I will analyze the construction of gendered identity amongst Palestinian-American girls, and how this is articulated with their parents' own identities as Palestinians. Notions of family honour and the articulation of women and their sexuality with nationhood and communal identity mean that parents' Palestinian identities are "deposited" in their daughters' bodies.

In all of this the most important lesson is the notion that ethnicity, race, nationality, and religion, although always intersected by gender, class, locale, and context, are identities--even though characterized by "ascription"--that can be deployed, obscured, alternatively worn and put away, as the situation demands and as it opens favourable spaces to the subject. It is this theoretical lesson that underpins much of the material of chapter five, which draws on the context outlined in this chapter and the one following.

# Chapter Four

## On Honour, Palestinian-American Girls, and "Return"

> Since the peace plans things have been settling down a little and more Palestinians are returning back to their homeland (if they're allowed back in). Your father has been gone for thirty-three years. Even though he's lived in America for more than half his life, he felt there is something missing in his life. So your father came back to his homeland to be with his family, his mother and to teach you and your siblings the Palestinian culture and about your roots. Everyone has to return to their homeland and learn about their roots. The way I see it each person in this life is like a tree. If a tree doesn't have good roots or any roots at all it's a weak tree that can easily be knocked over. It's the same with a person. If they have no roots or sense of identity then they're lost in life because if they don't know where they come from then they don't know where they're going. But, if a tree has good, strong roots then it's a healthy tree that nobody can knock over. Just like a person who knows about their culture and roots they're sure about themselves and their identity so they prosper in life. I hope you become a healthy tree with strong roots and have a good understanding of your culture and Palestine. Jerusalem is where your ancestors came from and it's your city of roots (Hallak 1995, 49-50)--*a Palestinian great-aunt speaking to her American-Palestinian niece.*

> In the national order of things, the rooting of peoples is not only normal; it is also perceived as a moral and spiritual need (Malkki 1992, 30).

In the previous chapter I illustrated how Palestinian-American girls' ethnic, racial, and national identities are multiple and contingent. However, issues of gender are central to the construction of such identities so that boys and girls, men and women, are Palestinian, Arab, Muslim, and American differently. This chapter focuses on the gendered identities that Palestinian-American girls negotiated and deployed. As already suggested in the earlier chapter, issues of family honour are central to Palestinian identity, and this not only shapes the girls' identities as Palestinian but also those of their family members. Hence, a brief survey of some of the theoretical literature that deals with kinship, and honour and shame, including writings that also touch on gender, nationality and ethnicity is warranted before turning our attention to the ethnographic data. Read within the context of this literature, it becomes clear that the "return" of American-Palestinian girls to their fathers' West Bank villages is a critical aspect of their parents' own maintenance of Palestinian identity.

Being "Palestinian" commonly entails a belief in a primordial connection to the land, an agrarian mythology, and a hearkening back to pastoral visions of village life (Gonzalez 1989b, 75-6; Swedenburg 1990; Majaj 1994, 69). This "centredness [geographical locale] is articulated in terms of a geographic core which becomes, in effect, a metaphor for an ideological core around

which one's identity revolves" (Mandel 1990, 153).[1] In "the idiom of Palestinian nationalism...the figure of the peasant looms large", thus naturalising Palestinian connection to the specific geographical locale known to Palestinians as *'Filastin'* (Swedenburg 1990, 18), and to Israelis as "*Eretz* (greater) Israel", or "Judea" and "Samaria" (the West Bank). Indeed, this subscription to an ancient and primordial connection to the land is a Palestinian national obligation in the face of continuing dispossession at the hands of the Israeli military and state, and is a psychological and cultural mode of defiance (Swedenburg 1990; also see Falah 1989). Like many other national groupings, Palestinians "think of themselves, as being rooted in place and as deriving their identity from that rootedness....very often they [metaphors of national/ethnic identity] are specifically arborescent in form" (Malkki 1992, 27).[2] Territorialising identity in such a "rooted" way, then, "directly enables a vision of territorial displacement as pathological" (Malkki 1992, 31), as we can see in the Palestinian great-aunt's message to her American-Palestinian grand-niece in the quote above. She wants her niece, recently "returned" to Palestine from the US, to become a "healthy tree with strong roots"--something which is impossible for a Palestinian to do in the US because, presumably, they do not have the right kind of soil in the States.

Yet the previous chapter and the statement of one American-Palestinian teenager to me highlights the slippery, shifting nature of national and ethnic identities, and perhaps all types of identities: "Here [in Palestine] I'm 'American' and there [in the US] I'm 'Palestinian.'" Alia was speaking to the contextual nature of identity, and pointing out that identity is a relational process rather than a fixed, consistent, essential entity. In this realisation she is joined by many writers influenced by postmodern, feminist, anthropological, social and psychoanalytic theories in their analyses of the nature of identity and its construction (Calhoun 1994; Larrain 1994; Henriques et al. 1984; Hall 1989, 1994; Butler 1990a; Moore 1994a; Nagel 1994; Somers, Gibson 1994).

As psychoanalytic and anthropological literature informs us, the family is the central site of construction of gendered and ethnic identities amongst diasporic and non-diasporic groups (see,

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[1] See Gupta and Ferguson (1992) for an analysis of the isomophorism of space, place and identity.

[2] For Palestinians, the olive tree serves as a very potent cultural "arborescent" symbol. In fact, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict over the years has frequently involved trees--their uprooting and their planting--as a way of claiming ownership over West Bank land. During the *intifada*, Palestinian agricultural committees such as PARC and UAWC encouraged farmers to plant their land with trees as a way of avoiding their land being confiscated as "uncultivated land", and each week the old *Al-Fajr* newspaper used to report in its pages how many trees had been uprooted by the IDF in preparation for land confiscation or as a punishment for stone-throwing or other "security" violations (Scholey 1992, 70-1). Tree uprooting continues today as a precursor of land confiscation carried out by the IDF. One old man, a father of five children, wept as he spoke to a reporter about trees uprooted by the IDF in August 1997: "Believe me, I have never cried in my life, until I saw my trees lying like dead bodies on the land. When my parents died, I did not shed a tear. But now, I can't help but cry" (Daraghmeh 1997, 9).

for example, Rubin 1975; Yanagisako, Collier 1987; Howell, Melhuus 1993; Pattie 1994; Das Gupta 1997). Indeed, the root and branch imagery noted by Liisa Malkki (1992) goes beyond territorialising identity and well-being to encompass notions of kinship and home:

> more broadly, metaphors of kinship...and of home...are also territorializing in this same sense [as the "roots" imagery]; for these metaphors are thought to "denote something to which one is naturally tied". Motherland and fatherland, aside from their other historical connotations, suggest that each nation is a grand genealogical tree, rooted in the soil that nourishes it (Anderson 1983, 131 cited in Malkki 1992, 27-8).

The family tree, thriving on the soil of the motherland or fatherland, then, primordialises and familialises national groupings, linking them to particular territories and turning nations into families and (usually male) political leaders into fathers.[3]

The discussion of family trees leads us to studies of kinship, which used to be limited to genealogical diagrams and esoteric terminologies. Now, some feminist anthropologists claim that gender studies have become the replacement for the study of kinship (Yanagisako, Collier 1987; Howell, Melhuus 1993). However, all too often "gender" implies only women, and regularly speaks of them in isolation from their female and non-spousal kin.[4] "Kinship", while frequently implying lineage, marriage, and inheritance patterns, at least encompasses notions of the whole of the family, and often includes those relations not encompassed in agnatic or affinal terms.

Rather than dwell on debates about Middle Eastern kinship, I would instead like to frame this discussion along the lines of kinship as an idiom for broader social relations. Here I take my cue from Hildred Geertz (1979) who explains that in Morocco, kinship is not merely an agnatic or affinal affair, but encompasses friendship and patron-client relations as well. All three types of relations "are ordered by the same cultural principles", and closeness is determined by "the summation of personal debts and obligations that has historically been built between them" (Geertz 1979, 315-16). Geertz (1979, 351) explains that "[k]inship obligations and privileges cannot, in Moroccan cultural formulations be separated from all other types of ties, such as patronage, as somehow qualitatively and jurally different." The Moroccan example is relevant to the Palestinian case in that they share a similar village kinship system (Eickelman 1989, 154-6).

Of course, one of the ways that kin ties are constructed or consolidated is through marriage. Negotiations surrounding marriage are often so highly fraught with tension in Morocco and

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[3] In the case of Fatah, the dominant faction of the PLO, the top leaders took on *nom de guerres* along this vein, which have stuck to this day. Thus, Yasser Arafat is popularly known as "Abu Ammar" where *abu* means "father".

[4] I want to clarify here that I do not see "gender" in this way, only that this is still frequently misinterpreted as its meaning. For a further elaboration on the uses of and difficulties with the term "gender" see Nicholson (1994).

elsewhere in the Middle East because "many delicate and highly valued social bonds are being tested, reinforced, or fabricated with each new contract" (Geertz 1979, 376). Indeed, this quality of tension can be deduced from Hilma Granqvist's classic study of marriage in Palestine (1931, 1935) and in Abner Cohen's ethnography (1965) of Palestinians in Israel.

Not only do kin ties extend beyond agnation and affinity, there is also a quality of enmeshment that accompanies these ties. As one of Geertz's (1979, 316) informants told her, "his family was *mustabik* ('tangled', 'interwoven', 'interlaced')--a remark that was accompanied by a graphic gesture of twisting together the fingers of both hands into a constantly moving but tightly bound knot". For instance, within the extended family and neighbourhood

> there is little privacy. Everyone is well known to everyone else. Few of one's activities and feelings can be kept secret. There is constant conversation going on among the women, a continual probing into and commenting on everyone's affairs....The give-and-take of mutual review and appraisal continues at all times, sometimes desultory and trivial, sometimes intense and agonistic (Geertz 1979, 333).

Moreover, Geertz (1979, 334) concludes that the nature of this enmeshment has particular effects on how people act out their social relations within their families and neighbourhoods: "Decisions and choices, the acts whereby social roles are given their sharpest expression and definition, are, in these circumstances, products of multiple social appraisals and pressures, rather than individual." Thus, Geertz seems to be suggesting, "the person" in the Arab household and neighbourhood is not just an "individual". I will return to this notion when I discuss Suad Joseph's work on "patriarchal connectivity" in chapter five.

A discussion of kinship ties in the Middle East cannot go very far without addressing the voluminous literature on honour and shame in the Mediterranean. Indeed, conceptions of family honour were regularly invoked by my respondents. However, I approach the notion of an honour and shame "complex" in the Mediterranean with Alison Lever's (1986) caution that too often the concept of honour has been ahistorically applied, and has acted as a "red herring" to distract attention from non-dominant groups' values and class and gender divisions in communities. I also remain unconvinced that the complex of honour and shame is uniquely Mediterranean.[5] However, throughout the ethnographic literature on the Mediterranean there exists an "organic connection between sexuality and economic criteria in the evaluation of moral character" (Gilmore 1987, 7), and "the correlative emphasis on female chastity and the desirability of [female] premarital virginity remain strong throughout the region" (Gilmore 1987, 3). Nonetheless, honour and shame need not be binary opposites, and women and men may define honour quite differently (Wikan 1984). Uni

[5] Not only is there a huge body of literature on honour and shame in Latin America, but I also believe that an honour and shame complex exists, at least in some social strata, in North America. However, a treatment of this question would be diversionary in the context of this dissertation.

Wikan (1984, 644) contends, "Most persons will commit many positive and some highly honourable acts, and many negative and some compromising ones, and all of them have their place in the accounting". Moreover, her field research in Oman demonstrates that, based on their diverging feelings about a female neighbour's adultery, men and women evaluated female honour on different terms. In fact, it has been noted that within the Mediterranean literature there seems to be no consensus on what honour is.[6] As Maureen Giovannini (1987, 61) writes, "honor may encompass one or several of the following evaluative criteria: wealth, ancestry, physical strength and prowess, piety, and sexual comportment".

Most problematic of all in much of the literature is that both honour and shame have been reified into things which people either possess or do not, win or lose. There seems to be very little recognition of honour and shame as relational concepts. Briefly, a general description of the traditional honour and shame construct as found in much of the literature is offered by Forouz Jowkar (1986, 47-8):

> The image of harmonious villages organized hierarchically along the principle of honor, conceived as a moral resource accessible to everybody, has camouflaged the exact relation between the code of honor and material privilege....In the Mediterranean region the dominant ideology for the transformation of people into sexual beings revolves around the ideology of honor and shame, which in most cases are differentially applied to men's and women's sexual comportment. While the ideology of honor and shame is not exclusive to the evaluation of sexual propriety, ethnographical accounts unanimously point to the socially expected chastity of women and sexual virility of men. Women's sexual purity should ideally be maintained even though deviance might be accommodated by their class position....The exhibition of men's sexual virility inside the marriage bond is expected, and outside of it is subject to local, ethnic, and class variations.

I would like to add to this description that sexual impropriety implicating one's female kin constitutes a "loss" of honour. The following discussion of the honour and shame construct will examine it as both a discourse and a relation, present at social levels ranging from the interpersonal and the familial to the nation and state, that has particular implications for the day-to-day practices of unmarried Palestinian-American girls both in the US and in the West Bank.[7]

The notion of honour and shame cultural complexes as only existing in small-scale, face-to-face communities has been challenged by Victoria Goddard (1987, 172) by citing Verena Martinez-Alier's (1972) work on Cuba, and with her own fieldwork example of urban Naples. Alternatively, one elderly Palestinian village woman informant tells Kitty Warnock (1990) that "shame" is a modern invention, introduced in the wake of better communication and transportation networks

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[6] More importantly, the literature all too frequently assumes that "honour" and "shame" are foundational concepts shaping gender relations in any given community, without questioning their existence or exploring local definitions or meanings of these notions if they do exist.

[7] The space constraints of this paper prevent me from reviewing much of the important literature on honour and shame. Peristiany (1965) and Pitt-Rivers (1965) are regarded as classics but are not reviewed here.

between the village and the outside world and the decline of agriculture that has left men and women more leisure time. "It's nowadays we have to think about shame, when boys and girls are wandering around the streets all day looking at each other," she tells Warnock (1990, 110), "[n]obody looked at anyone else with the eye of sex [in the old days] as they do today; we were too few, and too busy". Finally, Lila Abu-Lughod (1986) challenges the notion of honour as solely a male preserve. By identifying shame as modesty, Abu-Lughod argues for modesty as female honour. "Because men of honor, those responsible for dependents, embody the values of the honor system and also represent it and bear responsibility for upholding it," Abu-Lughod writes (1986, 157), "sexuality is a challenge not only to the system but to these men's positions as well." Therefore, at least among the Alwad 'Ali Bedouin community in Egypt, "To express sexuality is...an act of defiance, and to deny it is an act of deference" (Abu-Lughod 1986, 157). While men and women both engage in the discourse of honour, this may not always result in a shared evaluation of men and women's characters.[8]

Abu-Lughod's (1986) analysis suggests that women's practices of honour maintenance have a direct bearing on the identities and status of their male kin. David Gilmore asks why male honour is eroticised, and looks to male upbringing in the Mediterranean area for some answers and speculates that "these men are defending, through honor/shame polarities and prohibitions, against unacceptable female identifications" (1987, 12). Of interest here is the fact that in 1920s Artas, Palestine, for a male to suffer impotence was to be "like a woman" (Granqvist 1935, 154). Brought up almost solely by women until puberty, "boys...are denied an accessible male figure with whom to identify with at the precise time that the primary gender-identity formation is going on....[the "consequence" being] emotional closeness and affective 'symbiosis'...of mothers and sons" (Gilmore 1987, 14). Of course, mothers of boys also have their own social and familial reasons for fostering this closeness (Kandiyoti 1988). Without the assistance of a male rite of passage,[9] pubescent boys must "make the hazardous spatial and behavioral transition from the female world to the homosocial world of men....he must break forever the primary feminine association with home and mother that endangers his masculine image among his peers" (Gilmore 1987, 15). The absence of a rite of passage has an enduring consequence: "Since an abiding masculinity is neither conferred nor confirmed in the Mediterranean societies, this individual proof must be continual and unrelenting [through the honour idiom], because it is undermined perpetually

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[8] See Dwyer (1978), Wikan (1984), and Bauer (1985) for how this plays out in Morocco, Oman, and Iran, respectively.

[9] Here I believe that Gilmore is referring to an absence of a public and publicly acknowledged declaratory rite of passage where boys incontestably become men in Christian and Muslim communities. Of course, Jewish communities have the *barmitzvah*, and Israel's almost universal military service (an exception is made for Orthodox Jews) also initiates young recruits at a ceremony at Masada that could be seen as a rite of passage into both manhood and citizenship.

by incredulity and suspicion from within and without" (Gilmore 1987, 15).[10] I would add here, given Joseph's (1994a) analysis discussed below, that a continual display of mastery over his kinswomen's sexuality, would constitute "proof" of masculinity and transition from being a junior boy to a senior man. As one elderly Palestinian village woman informed Warnock(1990, 33),

> Men's attitude to women comes from their upbringing. When a man gets married, everyone says, "Don't let your wife control you." That is a man's most basic fear. His manhood is measured by how well he can control his wife.

Deniz Kandiyoti (1994) discusses the impact of the upbringing of boys in the Middle East. Change in attendance at the communal *hammam* (bath) marked a type of ritual passage from the world of women to the man's world in the early 20th century and before. At puberty a boy was expected to stop attending the *hammam* with his mother to accompany his father instead. Kandiyoti(1994, 204) speculates:

> We are left to ponder what range of feelings the nubile boy might have experienced under the adult male gaze. It is at the point of entry into the male world that he might have felt 'feminized' by virtue of his still immature body, whereas his status as the unquestionable possessor of a penis might have been more secure among women. It is a matter of conjecture whether or not this experience is reactivated throughout men's lives, particularly when they find themselves in all-male contexts which involve hierarchies of power in which they perceive themselves as relatively powerless (for instance, as conscripts in the army and new students in boarding schools).

Here, then, is a description of a situation that highlights the ambivalence described by Gilmore. In particular, by using examples of men's experiences in the modern Turkish army and the Istanbul fire brigade at the turn-of-the-century, Kandiyoti (1994, 212) adeptly argues for "situating masculinities--however fragmented and variegated they may appear--in historically and culturally specific institutional contexts which delimit and to some extent constrain the range of discourses and choices available to social actors".

Similarly, by examining the brother-sister relationship in 1970s suburban Beirut, Joseph (1994a) examines how male and female sexuality is constructed, moulded, and controlled. In discussing the interaction between one older teenaged brother and his younger pubescent sister, Joseph (1994a, 52) explains that "Hanna was teaching Flaur to accept male power in the name of love....[and] Flaur was reinforced in learning that the love of a male could include that male's violent control and that to receive this love involved submission to control". Joseph (1994a, 52) also draws out the interconnectivity of sexual and gender construction:

> Hanna was additionally teaching Flaur how to present her feminine sexuality. She was learning to become a sexual person for her brother. Given Abu Hanna's [their father]

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[10] The issue of a Palestinian male rite of passage in the *intifada* is explored by Peteet (1994).

> absence and the interest that Hanna took in her, her brother was the most involved male sexual figure during her puberty. *By feminizing Flaur, Hanna was masculinizing himself* [emphasis mine]. Hanna was also using his culturally acceptable control over his sister to challenge his father's authority in the family. By taking charge of his sister, with blessings of his mother and siblings, he highlighted his father's failures as head of the household. Hanna was learning how to become a patriarch by becoming the man of the house in relation to his sister, mother, and younger siblings. Hanna and Flaur's relationship socialized each other into the links between gender, sexuality, love, and power.

Flaur was actively engaged in this process, openly and laughingly admitting that she frequently "provoked" Hanna. Their relationship was viewed by all (men and women alike) as loving and close. Flaur indicated that she would eventually like to have a husband like her brother (Joseph 1994a, 51). Thus, Joseph (1994a, 60-62) demonstrates that complicated relations of competition, submission, and dominance between men are not the only sites of masculine identity building, but that these dynamics are an integral part of brother-sister relations and mutual, albeit asymmetrical, processes of sexualisation. Moreover, within the context of kin relations (in this case, brother-sister relations), there seems to be an intricate connection between love, power, and identity construction.

But honour is not only about sexuality and sexual identity. A gap in much early analysis has been the relationship between material position and honour. Responding to this question, J. Davis (1977) concludes that honour has everything to do with economic position and access to resources, as well as integrity. For Davis (1977, 98), honour is a "system of stratification...[that] describes the distribution of wealth in a social idiom, and prescribes appropriate behaviour for people at the various points in the hierarchy...entail[ing] acceptance of superordination and subordination." While honour is also "associated with integrity", it nonetheless defines competition for and access to resources (Davis 1977, 98). Thus, "honour" is both an idiom for class as well as a code of behaviour and comparison, with some correlation with personal character.

In her ethnography of the Afghan Durrani, Nancy Tapper (1991) ties together the practice of avoidance of honour confrontations, material and social power, and women's agency. She maintains that it is usually only in households that are economically and politically weak, that cannot afford to deal with the costs of an honour confrontation head-on, that women engage in sexual misconduct. Further, Tapper (1991, 222-236) elaborates on the issue of women's sexual misconduct as a strategy to better their own material and/or social position. "Ironically," Tapper (1991, 232) concludes, "it is women associated with successful households who have the fewest alternative means of personal expression."[11]

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[11] Tucker (1993, 205) also makes this point as she argues that "the historical Arab family was far from being a monolithic institution." By examining court records concerning property and marriage transactions in Cairo and Nablus in the 19th century, Tucker indicates that there was variation across class in the actual practice of investing honour in female behaviour.

However, this equation is not always so clear-cut. Cohen (1965) relates the story of a marriage between a woman and a man from two prominent and rivalrous *hamayal* (village clans) in Israel, the Matars and the Barhams. Fatima Matar's decision to marry Khalid Barham was complex, based on personal sentiment, the fact that Khalid was a teacher and more prestigious than the proposed Matar groom, a labourer, and because she and her brother (who also supported the marriage to Khalid) were willing to disregard their father as they were angry about his divorce of their mother. Most importantly, the conflict over the marriage was about the two families' political prestige and rivalry in the village as well as personal webs of obligation and sentiment. In the end, Fatima defied her father and her clan by escaping to the neighbouring village to become betrothed to Khalid, compromising the honour of the Matars. At the time of Cohen's fieldwork, Fatima's father ceased to acknowledge her, even after the birth of her first child, and the Matar *hamula* considered the case far from closed, with some of the men even confiding to Cohen that, if the opportunity presented itself, they would kill Fatima (Cohen 1965, 71-93).

As Geertz (1979) has made clear, marriage arrangements are fraught with tensions for the groom's family, testing as they do the strength of relations with kin and social allies. Richard and Nancy Tapper (1992/93, 3) indicate that for the bride's family the situation is also difficult: "A central problem for any family is the divided and changing loyalties of a daughter, once she is married and raising sons for her husband's family....The issue of male control of women before and after marriage (relations of reproduction) leads directly to questions of economic and political organization (relations of production)." The Tappers (1992/93) and Michael Meeker (1976) demonstrate that the notions of honour and responsibility attached to marriage differ according to region in the Middle East. In the "Northern Tier"[12] when a daughter marries all responsibility for her transfers from her natal family to the family of her husband. In the Arab Middle East responsibility for a woman's honour remains with her natal family even after marriage. According to Meeker, in the Arab world when a woman marries control over her sexuality passes to her husband; a distinction is therefore made between those who control her, her husband and his family, and those who love her, her natal family. However, Meeker (1976, 388) explains, "Among the Arabs, a disgrace of a woman or a slander touches directly the sharaf [honour] of *those who 'love'*".[13] Arab husbands/fathers/brothers, then, share an interest in the control of wives/daughters/sisters:

> The brother, by protecting his sharaf, protects the 'ard of the husband. The husband, by protecting his 'ard, "covers" the sharaf of the brother....[endogamous marriage is preferred because] if the two sides were not close, a father or brother would be placing

[12] The Tappers (1992/3, 11) use the term "Northern Tier" to indicate Turkey, Iran, Afghanistan, and parts of Pakistan.

[13] Meeker (1976, 384) defines *sharaf* as "the ultimate and most encompassing category of honor". *Sharaf* includes *a'rd*, which is defined as sexual honour. While a husband's *a'rd* is connected to the control of his wife's sexual comportment, his *sharaf* is not (Meeker 1976, 387).

> his daughter or sister (and therefore his sharaf) in the hands of a man who had not the slightest concern for her (or his 'ard). Likewise, the husband would be marrying a woman for whom no one would be able to provide protection (Meeker 1976, 392).[14]

The Tappers indicate that a concern both for their reputation and control over resources fuels the woman's natal family desire for an endogamous marriage. Thus, close-kin marriage is preferable in order to wield maximum influence over their daughters' marriages in the future (Tapper, Tapper 1992/3, 13-14).

So far, much of the literature on honour and shame, and ethnographies that deal with this issue, confine their discussions to small communities and rural areas. But the Middle East region has been, and continues to be, subject to rapid political and economic change. Changes such as urbanisation, new class formation, female participation in wage labour, increasing incidence of the young nuclear family, political strife, and so on, beg the question of their impact on the honour code.[15] Further, when it comes to Palestinian-American girls who have mostly grown up in metropolitan US cities (and in the case of most of the girls I interviewed, in isolation from other Palestinians, Arabs, and Muslims), honour discourses, gendered relations based on this discourse, and practices to maintain family honour, take on more deliberate, heightened and self-conscious forms than those found in the West Bank villages of their parents.

The honour and shame construct is under pressure, masking access to material resources and idealising the traditional sexual division of labour (Jowkar 1986). With the rise of nation-states as a result of Western capitalist penetration and colonial domination, the "overriding persistence of clientalistic vertical ties" provide a link between the village and centres of political and economic power. Family honour, then, has remained an important idiom, but its definition is under pressure. Political and organisational affiliation, and economic performance and vocational status as measures of honour may take precedence over kinswomen's sexual comportment.[16] Nonetheless, even in urban areas, the tendency is to retain village ties and to settle into closely-knit neighbourhoods, where women's sexual behaviour can still be a subject of gossip. Indeed, Louise Cainkar (1988) found that this was the case amongst Palestinian "new peasant migrants" in Chicago. The Middle Eastern state often takes a paradoxical stand toward women, compromising

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[14] Meeker (1976) is particularly guilty of talking about honour as if it is a thing which passes from man to man through women. In this sense Meeker's discussion of honour reminds me of Rubin's (1975, 190-92) explication of Lacan in the context of marriage as an exchange of women and "phalli".

[15] See Barakat (1985) for a general discussion of the changes involving the family in the Arab Middle East. Notably, he does not mention honour and shame.

[16] In Palestine this seems not to be the case, at least where female employment is concerned. Honour is still so strong a notion that kin idioms have even penetrated female wage labour networks where women are recruited for factory and other work through their fathers and brothers (Rockwell 1985, 123). Haj (1992, 770) reports that while sometimes Palestinian women are related to the subcontracted factory owner, most often "the employer establishes an informal relationship with the family of the worker and promises to protect and take care of her....[assuming] the paternalistic and authoritarian role of a patriarch [thus protecting family honour]."

between "premodern patriarchal sentiments and new imperatives for modernity" (Jowkar 1986, 57). In western countries where a fragment of the Palestinian diaspora resides, state policies and discourses of "multiculturalism" can serve to reinforce unequal gender relations (Yuval-Davis 1997, 201). Thus, honour and shame constructs are in flux, and serve now to "mask an inherent structural inequality of gender relations" (Jowkar 1986, 62) as well as bolster boundaries of ethnic and national identities in "foreign" contexts.

Much attention has been paid to the notion of honour, relations of gender, and their relation to state formation and national ideologies.[17] Andrew Parker et al. (1992) take as their point of departure the notion of "eroticized nationalism" and an understanding of the similarities and relationship between kinship and nationalism as relations rather than as ideologies. Goddard (1987, 180) makes claims based on her fieldwork in Naples that women are "boundary markers and carriers of group identity". She posits that as a result of this status, women are in a contradictory position, both powerful and subject to powerful control:

> The role of women as carriers of group identity has further repercussions of a less obvious nature, which, I would argue, are related to women's role and power as reproducers. Women may also be seen as the guardians of the 'secrets' of the group. By the very process of their control by men and their relegation to and identification with the domestic sphere, women are in a unique position to provoke a crisis within the group (Goddard 1987, 180).

Women, then, "as carriers of group identity and of an ideology based in kinship, are themselves seen to be in contradiction with the 'outsider', be this the state or all those who represent state ideology or ideologies contrary to that of kinship" (Goddard 1987, 184). As such, "women are not only the agents of boundary marking in hierarchical social structures, but are also the bearers of a deeper identity and its associated values, the carriers of the problematic 'us versus them'" (Goddard 1987, 184-5).

A village saying in the West Bank used to indicate a stranger, or one from another place, is *"mish min thobna"* ("not from our dress"). The *thobe* is the embroidered dress, still commonly worn, although decreasingly so by the younger generation, by village women. Traditionally, the *thobe* was embroidered with patterns specific to the wearer's village, town, or region. Additionally, the use of particular colours in the embroidery was a gauge of the wearer's sexual maturity and marital status. Women became widely known for their embroidery skills, which were a source of pride

[17] Again, because of space constraints, I have omitted a discussion of Schneider's (1971) and Ortner's (1978) early influential work on this issue. See Jayawardena (1986) and Yuval-Davis and Anthias (1989) for good overviews on state policies towards women and their relationship to gender relations and state-building.

(Weir 1989). What is interesting about this saying for my purposes is its conflation of women's and the group's identities.[18]

In the case of Israeli and Palestinian nationalist constructs, Sheila Katz (1996, 86-7) outlines a parallel process involving "the centrality of notions of manhood and masculinity to nationalism...the feminization of the land as a central symbol of survival...the ways nationalists imagined women...[and] the ways women colluded with or contested these constructions". Katz(1996, 88) cites Palestinian writer Fawaz Turki:

> to Palestinians, no phrase is more familiar--perhaps one should call it a metaphrase--than "ardi-'irdi". Translated literally it means "my land is my womenfolk." As understood by Palestinians, the phrase reads, "My land is my nobility...my being what I am".

Similarly, Rosemary Sayigh (1996, 148) draws a parallel between Partha Chatterjee's (1989) analysis of Indian nationalism and Palestinian nationalist identity. According to Chatterjee (1989, 624), in response to a physically and psychologically invasive British colonialism, Indian "nationalism was not simply about a political struggle for power: it related the question of the political independence of the nation to virtually every aspect of the material and spiritual life of the people", with women at the core of what was essential to being Indian. Frantz Fanon(1973, 438), too, talks about the French tactics used to penetrate Algerian defences by focusing their energies on "liberating" Algerian women:

> Every new Algerian woman unveiled announced to the occupier an Algerian society whose systems of defense were in the process of dislocation, open and breached. Every veil that fell, every body that became liberated from the traditional embrace of the haïk [veil covering face and body], every face that offered itself to the bold and impatient glance of the occupier, was a negative expression of the fact that Algeria was beginning to deny herself and was accepting the rape of the colonizer.

Women's position as bearers of group value and identity has serious repercussions for women as citizens. Kandiyoti (1993, 381) points to the identification of women with the private and the "'inner sanctum' of group identity". The implication of this position is that "[w]henever women continue to serve as boundary markers between different national, ethnic and religious collectivities, their emergence as full-fledged citizens will be jeopardized, and whatever rights they may have achieved during one stage of nation-building may be sacrificed on the altar of identity politics during another" (Kandiyoti 1993, 382). Indeed, Nira Yuval-Davis (1997, 195) borrows from J. Armstrong (1982) by calling women "symbolic 'border guards'" of ethnic or national collectivities who mark boundaries and articulate difference through the practice of particular cultural codes, dress, public conduct, and language.

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[18] I am grateful to Dina Abou-El-Haj for this information (Personal communication, Ramallah, 17 December 1993).

In the Palestinian case, "The quest for a peculiarly authentic 'Palestinianism' assigns women contradictory positions; they have been appointed on the one hand to provide a commentary on suffering and tragedy and, on the other hand, to be commentators on, or a measure of, militancy. 'Mothers of martyrs' combine elements of both" (Peteet 1993, 56). In the West Bank and the Gaza Strip in 1993 I observed similar dynamics. Kandiyoti's arguments seem to be valid in Palestine as various women, caught in the matrix of the political struggle between the current governing authority and political opposition to it from Islamist groups, are struggling for citizenship rights in the name of democracy.[19]

In diaspora, particularly in western countries, the stakes are just as high. "Concerns about 'racial contamination'", Avtar Brah (1996, 164) observes, "may stir patriarchal fears about women's sexuality." Laura Nader's (1989, 324) notions of "occidentalism" and "orientalism" where "the Moslem world exists 'for' the West...[and] the West also exists 'for' the Islamic world and serves as important contrastive comparison which restricts and controls women's resistance" plays a part in how many Palestinian-Americans and Palestinians view the US. This sense of the west as "other", and implicit in this, degenerate, immoral, and violent, is heightened for Palestinian families living in large metropolitan US cities where their family businesses are frequently located in the "inner city", but where their family homes are located in middle and upper-middle class suburbs. Here, then, Palestinian parents are like many white middle class Americans who are deeply frightened and concerned about rape, drugs, gangs, and other phenomena of violence that are increasingly and commonly perceived to be norms of the urban American landscape.[20] This dichotomous identity construction ("Arab" vs. "American") is illustrated by one young woman interviewed in "*Benaat* Chicago":

> I grew up being taught that Arabs are perfect. That we don't do anything wrong--it's all Americans, whether it be the drugs or the gangs or the abused kids. I was always taught that Arabs don't do that, that it's all Americans (American Friends Service Committee 1996).

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[19] For instance, the leader of one women's committee told me in 1993 that they were beginning to confront the issue of family violence through the use of posters and slogans. One of them asked, "Is it democratic to beat your wife?" More recently, the Women's Center for Legal Aid and Counselling held a "Palestinian Model Parliament on Women and Legislation" where various items of model legislation concerning women's status and rights were debated by elected women delegates in televised plenary sessions. Although the project had the support of prominent Palestinian Legislative Council members, and even Yasser Arafat himself, it was severely denounced from mosque loudspeakers where sheikhs suggested that the project was a foreign and western conspiracy to undermine Islam and named individual women participants of the project in their condemnations (Abusway 1998).

[20] McCarthy et al. (1997, 290-1) claim that "[t]he discourse of crime, violence and suburban security also points to deeper realities of abandonment, neglect and social contempt for dwellers in America's urban centres which are now registered in social policies that continue to see the inner city as the inflammable territory of 'the enemy within' and the police as the mercenary force of suburban middle classes."

Palestinian migrants to the US have a more intimate knowledge of the west than do their counterparts still living in Palestine, and so the impact of "occidentalism" in the Middle East doubly accounts for how Palestinian-American daughters are raised in the US:

> Knowledge about the West has a strong bearing on the position of women, for it is through this knowledge that the grip on women is justified in many countries of the Middle East. *Women are no longer treated as Arab women, but as "potential Westerners", posing a severe identity crisis* (Nader 1989, 327, emphasis mine).

The danger posed to their daughters as a result of growing up in the midst of American culture, as perceived by their Middle Eastern parents, cannot be underestimated. As Ally told me, "The way I see it, when we're over there [in the US] our parents don't want us to get 'lost.'" These girls, mostly American citizens born and raised in the US, are indeed "potential Westerners". This not only poses a "severe identity crisis" for the girls, but also for their parents. In speaking of diasporic families, Arjun Appadurai (1990, 18) points out that cultural maintenance and reproduction become less a matter of "habitus" (Bourdieu 1977) and more "an arena for conscious choice, justification and representation....[that] becomes both politicized and exposed to the traumas of deterritorialization." "Women," Appadurai (1990, 18-19) says, "become pawns in the heritage politics of the household [where]....the honor of women becomes increasingly a surrogate for the identity of embattled communities of males".

Nonetheless, in what follows we will see that the girls I interviewed do not fully take up daughterly and sisterly roles defined by notions of honour and patriarchal family and social relations, or at least not without some resistance or resentment. Growing up in the US context, more individualistic and western feminist ideologies about relations have also informed these girls' fantasies of themselves, and have been inserted in their situatedness as West Bank village girls, as will become apparent in this chapter and the one following.

It should also be noted that West Bank-born Palestinian girls, women and men do not all fully subscribe to notions of family honour relations defined by enmeshment. Indeed, economic relations transformed by wage labour, increasing education and employment opportunities for girls and women, the Arab feminist movement, and leftist political ideologies have all had an impact on family relations in the Middle East and on how people aspire to be women and men, wives and husbands, mothers and fathers, daughters and sons, sisters and brothers.[21] Most important to realize is that gender roles are contested terrain,[22] where notions of family relations

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[21] See Cohen (1965) and Moors (1996a) for a discussion of the impact of changing economic and social relations on gender relations. Much of the women and the *intifada* literature also examines changing gender relations resulting from the uprising (Giacaman, Johnson 1989; Abdo 1991; Haj 1992).

[22] See Hammami (1990) for a discussion of the *hijab* campaign during the *intifada* and how it illustrates the contested nature of the "proper" role of women. Findings in Heiberg and Øvensen (1993) and in Lang and

based on honour and patriarchal connectivity have legitimacy in some quarters, mostly characterized as "conservative", "traditional" or "religious",[23] as an ideal, or are characterized by the most "liberated" segments of Palestinian society as relics of the past that should or must be abandoned.

## "You're Arab, you're Muslim, you're different!": the practice of restrictions in the making of Palestinian-American girlhood

As one scholar observes, Muslim Arab-Americans balance a multiple and complex set of ethnic/national identities that capture a variety of associations and contexts:

> Contemporary Arab Muslim immigrants may perceive themselves as having at least four different identity associations at the same time. They may identify themselves as Islamic, Muslim, Syrian (or Iraqi, Yemeni, and so on), Arab, or American/Canadian at different times and in different contexts. These four aspects if identity can result in a minimum of twelve different combinations when the person attempts to describe his or her association, such as Arab Muslim American of Syrian descent or Muslim Arab Syrian who resides in America, and so on (Barazangi 1991, 133-4).

Interestingly, the author does not recognize that gender also has a role to play in identity construction--a point that has no small significance when it comes to growing up in the US as a Muslim Arab-American woman. Also, timing or generation of immigration has much to do with how these identities are deployed (Abu-Laban 1991; Cainkar 1991). In what follows, I will focus on issues having to do with how ethnic and gender identities were constructed in the families of unmarried daughters of Palestinian migrants to the US who were either born in the US or migrated there at an early age. As I have discussed above, ethnicity and gender are inextricably linked, and the nexus of this relationship between the two sets of identities is the family and kin relations.

Palestinian women have, throughout the history of their emigration to the US, tended to migrate as wives, daughters, or sisters. This is also the case of all of the mothers of the girls that I spoke with. In other words, they come not as students or workers, but as family members with all the associated expectations that go with female family roles (Cainkar 1994, 87). In these roles, and especially in their role as mothers, they are assigned the duty of maintaining and transmitting Palestinian culture, which has had a particular salience for Palestinians since the occupation of

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Mohanna (1992) also reveal contradictory ideas and practices of Palestinian gender roles. Also see Dwyer (1978) and Bauer (1985) for accounts of how women subvert, practically and psychologically, "traditional" or "conservative" notions of women's "proper" gender role.

[23] However, it should also be noted that "Muslim feminists" are using Islam as an ideological means to assert women's rights (Haddad 1984, 158-9; Stowasser 1993, 24-5). There is some evidence that women on an individual and/or unorganised level employ this strategy, as I will discuss further in chapter five.

the remainder of Palestine in 1967, encouraging an ethos of non-assimilation in the US (Cainkar 1994, 88, 95).[24] Emigrating Palestinians bring with them a particular version of Palestinian culture, one rooted in ideas and idealised memories of West Bank villages and peasantry at the time of their departure, sometimes as long ago as twenty to thirty years (Cainkar 1994, 97). Moreover, Palestinian "identity" of immigrants to the US frequently takes the form of a nationality/ethnicity that is collapsed with customary practices of Islam. As one researcher notes, while in their homeland these parents practised Islam as a "religious duty"; once in North America "identity association" with Islam "was mostly a reflection of their idealized view of the past or of ethnic customary experience" (Barazangi 1991, 138).

Not only are women the guardians and transmitters of Palestinian culture in the US, they are frequently judged by other members of the community on how well they perform this most important of all tasks (Cainkar 1994, 97-98):

> Among most segments of the Palestinian community in Chicago, the respect of other Palestinians is gained by showing respect for Palestinian culture. This respect is judged on the basis of the behavior of a family's female members, who are the symbols of a family's commitment to its Palestinian identity. They bear the burden of the family's honor in the ethnic community. This pattern of judgement has taken on a life of its own such that even if a girl's parents were willing to relax some rules, concern over the condemnation of others has stopped them (Cainkar 1991, 294).

It is for these reasons that Amal's parents, who had made a conscious decision to raise their three daughters in a "liberal" manner, decided to live outside of the Palestinian and Arab neighbourhoods in their city: "They [her parents] were active in the Palestinian community but we didn't live in it....my father wanted us to do things without people talking....they needed to [live outside of the Palestinian community], they knew they were raising us in a different way."

Moreover, Palestinian communities in the US are not the only observers and evaluators of parents' success in raising their children. Given the nature of modern technology which allows frequent communications with those still in the homeland,

> families are acutely aware that relatives and friends in the old country are monitoring and assessing their family's adaptations in non-Muslim North America. They are aware they are being judged (Abu-Laban 1991, 26-7).

Finally, "[t]hese Palestinian women say they are not in the United States to stay and therefore seek to maintain the behavioral patterns that were normative in their social group when they left Palestine" (Cainkar 1994, 100), and presumably seek to inculcate their daughters with these same

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[24] This is in sharp contrast to the more assimilationist trends found amongst Arabs and Palestinians who immigrated before the post-1967 era (Abu-Laban 1991; Cainkar 1994). Also see Haddad (1983) for a

normative attitudes and behaviours. Palestinian migrants to the US have a history of seeing their stay there as temporary, up to and including current Palestinian-American immigrants: "the vast majority of Palestinian women in the United States say they plan to return to Palestine if a Palestinian state is created" (Cainkar 1994, 88).

Despite the sizeable Palestinian community in Chicago, many of the women Cainkar (1988, 1991, 284) interviewed, especially those whose parents were earlier immigrants, grew up in relative isolation from other Palestinian Muslims in white middle class neighbourhoods, despite having a network of family relations within the Chicago metropolitan area. Those arriving with the later wave of Palestinian immigration to the US tended to live in urban neighbourhoods near other Palestinians, "form[ing] a buffer community between whites and African-Americans" (Cainkar 1994, 97). In contrast, most of the parents of the girls I spoke to were also late wave immigrants to the US, but they mostly tended to live in non-Arab middle and upper-middle class neighbourhoods, either "mixed" or mostly white, with few and in most cases no family members residing in their US metropolitan area.

Like the mothers of the girls I interviewed, Cainkar's informants' mothers usually did not work outside the home (Cainkar 1994, 97). Home itself was an embodiment of Palestinian culture, with decorations of Palestinian embroidery, pottery, and maps adorning the walls and shelves, the furniture arrangement itself, and all the manners of traditional Arab hospitality brought into play when guests and family visited (Cainkar 1994, 93, 98). As Dina told me, "We had more Arab stuff [flags, pictures of Arafat, etc.] in our house in America than we do here [in Palestine]".

Although many of the girls were extra-familially involved in Muslim and Palestinian activities in the US, as described in the previous chapter, most of my interviewees lived in American neighbourhoods and contexts where they and their nuclear family were frequently the only Arabs, Palestinians, or Muslims. (As Dina recalled her mostly white middle class neighbourhood in the US, she said about her family's location there, "and then there was us"--the only Arab Muslims in the area.) Even for the girls who described activity with other Palestinians, Arabs, or Muslims, it was their families, namely their parents, who were the conduit through which they were introduced to being Palestinian and Muslim in these ways. In this respect, Palestinians resemble the Armenian community in the US where "Armenianness" is based on an "archipelago of arenas" rather than a cohesive community: "Only a few neighborhoods in the United States function effectively as Armenian enclaves; as a result space cannot be habitually relied upon to reinforce the work of the social and at times political community....remains family centered and household based" (Pattie 1994, 187-8). Family, then, becomes "the linchpin of

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discussion of how Islamic practices took on particular North American adaptations by earlier Arab

ethnicity....Family provides an emotional connection, a desire to be part of a larger group of 'like' people; for many...it becomes the only tie they have with other Armenians" (Pattie 1994, 195). Likewise for the Indian diaspora in the US where one scholar describes the family as the first or only source of Indian "authenticity" for their Indian-American children:

> For the immigrants, the family continued to serve as the primary space where children were socialized into "Indian" ways of living. It was the site where "traditions", distinct from "American" ways, were produced. Parents, consequently, became the repositories of India's cultural wealth and ethical mores. They were the sole interpreters, upholders, and transmitters of their natal culture. More often than not, their class and regional origins informed their interpretations (Das Gupta 1997, 579-80).

Indeed, Monisha Das Gupta (1997) and Lisa Lowe (1991) both indicate in the cases of Indian-American and Asian-American identities, respectively, that it is difficult to separate out ethnic identity from that which is particular to individual family culture, background, and history. As these and other scholars have found, the family is an important transmitter of not only ethnic, but also national identity and nationalist sentiment. The family serves to construct nationalism and national identity, like ethnicity, as "structures of feeling", perhaps akin to Pierre Bourdieu's (1977) notion of "habitus":

> The persuasiveness of nationalism as a structure of feeling that transforms space into homeplace and interpolates individual and collective subjects as embodiers of national character (viewed as shared bio-genetic and psychic substance) hinges on tropes of kinship, gender, and sexuality (Alonso 1994, 386).

This is why I frequently heard statements like this one from Aisha:

> I've always known I was Palestinian, I've always known I was Muslim. My parents would teach us verses from the Qur'an in the same way they taught us Arabic; we grew up with it....I've always sung political songs, done *dabka* with my father and known I was Arab.

Note that in Aisha's quotation there is considerable conflation of being Muslim with being Arab and Palestinian. Or as Cindy quite poetically answered a similar query about feelings of difference in the US on the basis of being Palestinian, "Since I was awake to the world I knew I was Muslim." There is also a certain "normalcy" embedded in these recollections of early awareness, and indeed several of the girls remarked to me that it had always been "normal" for them to be Arab, Palestinian, and Muslim in the US.

However, this normalcy is also everywhere underpinned by a series of gendered expectations and limitations having to do with notions of appropriate Palestinian, Arab, and Muslim male and female roles and behaviour, and girls' own comportment, especially as it relates to dress,

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immigrants, and the reactions to these by post-1967 immigrants.

relations with unrelated men, social activities, and public behaviour. Here it is important to note that their daughters' Arabic language acquisition, where language is frequently a marker of national and ethnic identities, did not seem to be a consistent and primary concern to their parents. Likewise when it came to learning *dabka* and Palestinian or Arab songs, or even attendance at the mosque or Muslim religion classes. While several of the girls did report attending Arabic language classes, or learning about Islam or Palestinian folklore, these recollections of experiences and activities usually did not stand out prominently in the girls' descriptions of their lives in the US. They were mentioned in asides, or described in a few sentences. Certainly it was the case that not every girl reported experiences of this kind at all, and if they did, they said that they attended Arabic classes "for a few years" or went to the mosque "every once in a while" or "one year" they attended "Sunday school".[25] Even knowledge of their recent national history was usually sketchy at best, as was mentioned by the Friends School history teachers. What does stand out consistently is the girls' practice of restrictions designed to control and limit sexual expression. While these, too, varied in scope, every girl but one[26] reported a prohibition on dating, and most on participation in any mixed-sex social activity, particularly if it was extra-curricular. That seemed to be the irreducible core of what it meant to be "Arab", "Muslim", and "Palestinian".

The notion of practising restrictions may at first seem nonsensical. How can one practice a lack of action? Or how can *not* doing something play a defining role in one's identity? In his discussion of identity construction in a "globalized world", Alberto Melucci (1997, 64) follows other post-structuralist theorists of identity (Henriques et al. 1984; Butler 1990a; Moore 1994a) by positing that "the identity of a self becomes more of a field than an essence: not a metaphysical reality but a dynamic system defined by recognisable opportunities and constraints." Constraints need not only be understood to be concrete limits imposed by larger economic and political forces. For instance, in Michael Lambek's (1992, 245) analysis of the Malagasy in Mayotte, he defines taboos as "negative injunction[s] and an absence of...specific practice[s]". As such, they are restrictions that are imposed by others or by social institutions, or that are self-imposed. In themselves, he argues, taboos constitute "acts or practices" that are also

> acts of separation; they serve as boundaries, spatial and temporal, boundaries between or within persons and groups, boundaries which are marked on, or within, or by means of the body. In thus delineating and differentiating persons and bodies they help to constitute them (Lambek 1992, 247).

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[25] Muslim religion classes are frequently held on Sundays in the US, and thus are commonly referred to as "Sunday school". See Haddad (1983) for a description of how Muslim practices in the US are frequently adapted to accommodate, or even to resemble, Christian practices in the US.

Taboos are performed by the body, or are embodied practices, and so then shape "[d]aily practice and ordinary experience" (Lambek 1992, 252). Finally, Lambek (1992, 253) argues that "persons as moral entities are performatively constituted in part through the practice of their bodily taboos, that is, through living them." Similar to the strictures imposed by considerations of "honour" discussed above, "[p]eople in Mayotte possess social identity and value not only because of what they do but also because of what they reject or refrain from doing" (Lambek 1992, 259).

Closer to home in the Middle East, Gabriele vom Bruck (1997) borrows Lambek's (1992) notion of taboos as practices to examine the gendered identities of Yemeni women. Similar to vom Bruck's (1997) Yemeni women, the practice of restrictions by unmarried Palestinian-American girls were gendered and family-based, and as such produced Palestinian-American girls, daughters and sisters, as well as their brothers, and Palestinian fathers and mothers. However, gendered practices were not limited to restrictions, but also defined their training as future adults, as wives and mothers, or as husbands and fathers.

Training (or, even, apprenticeship) in the home as future housewives and mothers was one important aspect of girls' upbringing. Girls, from the age they are capable of performing domestic chores, are recruited to help their mothers who bear the entire load of the work in the absence of other female kin, who, Cainkar (1991, 285) claims, would have supported them if they were still in Palestine. Nancy recalled her contradictory feelings in this regard as a teenager in the US: "I felt like a middle-aged housewife because I had to cook and clean because my parents had to work....Then there were other times I was proud of my upbringing because other people would say we were so responsible."

Linda acted as a junior mother to her younger brothers and sisters. After school she would go home and clean, do dishes, help her siblings with their homework, and so on. Engaged to be married at the time of our sessions, Linda was adamant about not having children of her own right away. She told me that she was looking forward to marriage as a break from her household and mothering chores at home and believed that marriage might be easier than living with her family as it would be less work.

However, other girls were less sanguine about their relegation to housework duties. Dalal reported being subject to unequal gendered standards and expectations by her mother and brothers. By the time she was ten, she was "basically cleaning the whole house on my own." Later, as a US high

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[26] Amal was the exception, and she reported that her parents made a point of bringing their daughters up in a different way. For her, being "Palestinian" meant understanding the politics, speaking Arabic, and engaging in cultural/folkloric practices such as *dabka*.

school senior with a part-time job, this task fell to her younger sister. Dalal was angry that her brothers have never been required to do anything around the house, and she saw this as a double standard that extends beyond housework to other issues. Her brothers, Dalal said, "want us [she and her sister] to do everything for them but they don't want to do anything for us", for instance, running errands, being quiet when they need to study, and so on. This was reinforced by her mother, who supported her sons. At the time of our sessions Dalal was refusing to clean up her brothers' rooms, pick up after them, or prepare them food or drinks as a protest against what she perceived as their lack of respect for her. The breaking point was a few months before our interviews when her brothers refused to be quiet when she needed to study for a university exam. Out of frustration she beat one of her brothers in front of his friends. She told me during one of our sessions that her brothers weren't speaking to her, but Dalal figured that they needed her more than she needed them and that they would eventually "come around".

Laila reported that her (unemployed) father "helps" her (working) mother with the housework by doing dishes, and "feels sorry" for women in Palestine who have less supportive husbands. Nonetheless, Laila angrily observed that lately her father only helps her mother when there are no other family or friends to observe. Her brother, too, held the attitude that housework is "women's work" and refused to take on any domestic responsibilities.

In their upbringing as good Palestinian daughters the girls are required to learn a variety of household skills in preparation for their future marriages. Although Cainkar (1991, 285) speculates that housework obligations are placed on the daughters' shoulders to assist their mothers in a situation where they are isolated from any other kinswomen's assistance, it must be noted that once in Palestine the girls' load of housework seemed to continue unabated. As in the west, housework is "women's work", and men laud themselves for being progressive when they take even a small share in the labour. Finally, brothers and fathers not only benefit from the unequal sexual division of domestic labour (or, more accurately, the gendered allocation of domestic labour), they also perhaps indulge in a feeling of mastery when partaking of domestic goods and services (meals, housecleaning and laundry, etc.) provided to them by their female kin. Dalal's brothers expect their sisters to give, and are only expected by their mother to take in return. Laila's unemployed father need only "help" his full-time employed wife by doing the dishes out of sight of his family and friends in order to feel that he is subverting "backwards tradition" and being a modern, supportive husband modelled after ideal western standards.

Aside from being schooled in a gendered division of household labour, girls are expected to dress modestly, and often shorts, short skirts, sleeveless tops, and even bathing suits are prohibited. Adult women sometimes wear traditional garb (*thobe* and hair tied with a scarf and covered with long gauzy veil) or Islamic dress (*jilbab* and *mandil*) in the US (Cainkar 1991, 1994; Eisenlohr

1996). Once in Palestine, girls I spoke to might also take on Islamic dress, but never traditional Palestinian garb.[27]

Other restrictions centre on relations with unrelated males and sexual and social comportment. Dating is not permitted, nor are other friendly relations with unrelated men. Mixed sex parties, activities, and community events are also off-limits unless a male family member is present (Cainkar 1991, 1994; Eisenlohr 1996). The one exception amongst the girls I interviewed was Amal. Amal and her sisters were free, and in fact encouraged by their parents, to date (including full sexual relations) in the US, and Amal also felt that she had an entirely free hand to decide to marry or not, and to choose any spouse she desired. In the US, Amal said, she dated mostly Arab-Americans. She said that the Arab-Americans she dated were "open-minded" and liberal because the ones with more conservative notions would only date "American" girls. They would never be able to contemplate having an unmarried sexual relationship with an Arab girl. Only one line seemed to be drawn by her parents concerning her and her sisters' sexual conduct, as exemplified by the experience of Amal's sister. Amal's sister lived with an American of Spanish descent, who was also a Christian. This public display of unmarried sexual relations was too much for their father, who told her that she had to get married or else he would no longer recognise her as his daughter. Amal also disagreed with her sister's choice to live with her boyfriend, saying that in light of the fact that their parents gave them so much freedom, to push it to this extreme seemed a disrespect to their father ("Sleep with him if you want, do anything, but don't put him in this position"). Amal's sister and her boyfriend eventually got married.

The example of Amal, her sister, and her father provide an important clue as to the nature of honour and its maintenance. Amal's parents, as I have already mentioned, although deeply engaged with the Palestinian community in the US, deliberately chose to raise their daughters in a non-Palestinian, non-Arab neighbourhood in the US in order to provide their family with the greatest measure of social freedom possible so that their daughters might fully enjoy an upbringing with a minimum of restrictions. This included the freedom to date and participate in other mixed-sex socializing. Problems only arose after Amal's sister made public her unmarried sexual relations, putting their father in a "position" where he was forced to threaten to disown her. Amal and her sisters didn't contravene the demands of family honour by simply dating and engaging in sexual relations with their boyfriends. Amal, her sisters, and their parents had already negotiated the permissibility of these activities. Rather, honour was challenged once Amal's sister's "illicit" sexual conduct was made public and open to inspection by the larger community. In this respect, Amal and her family more closely resembled urban middle and upper-middle class Palestinian families living in the West Bank than any of the other girls I interviewed, as I will discuss in more

[27] The *thobe*, except for stylised or dressed-up versions of it worn on ceremonial occasions, is almost never

detail below. This might also partly explain why Amal, more than any of the other girls, found it easy to develop a circle of local Palestinian friends and to "fit in" once living in the West Bank.

Unlike Amal and her sisters, for many other Palestinian-American girls, even extra-curricular school activities can be out of bounds. Some girls are only allowed out to school and back unless they are under the close supervision of older or male family members. When out in public, women are expected to behave modestly and quietly, drawing as little attention to themselves as possible (Cainkar 1991, 1994; Eisenlohr 1996).

Sometimes the restrictions experienced by daughters of Muslim immigrants are so limiting that marriage is seen by the girls as a step towards freedom:

> My parents won't let me go anywhere without my brother. Now my brother has a girlfriend and doesn't want me tagging along! I'm so bored. It would be nice to be married (Abu-Laban 1991, 25).

Cainkar (1994, 291) argues that "[t]he American context actually *exacerbates* the gender disparities which exist in the ethnic cultural and religious systems". Ruth Mandel (1989a, 1990) makes similar points about Turkish migrants in Germany. Like Mandel, Cainkar (1991, 292) claims, "The interaction of ethnic, culture and traditional values, gender, and context can work against female autonomy and mobility, especially where 'contamination' from the core culture, perceived as morally bankrupt, is feared".

Sharon Abu-Laban (1991, 26), in studying various waves and generations of Arab migrants to North America observes that the latest wave of Muslim immigrant parents are dismayed not only by the example of white North American teenagers, but also by the more assimilated, earlier generations of Muslim immigrants and their children:

> [Latest wave] parents have what some would view as worrisome models of the North American child as found in the descendant [earlier immigrant] generations. Sometimes they are shocked by Muslims they meet. For the first time, a first generation group can have an anticipatory view of what their child could become. No longer are parental worries about phantom children who will someday be born, grow up and become North American. The descendants of the [earlier immigrant] families are sometimes seen as clear embodiments of how far Muslim children in North America may stray from children in the old world.

Sometimes girls are pulled out of high school at an "early age [fourteen or fifteen]" out of parental fears that their daughters are "unsafe at school" where exposure to sex, drugs, and gangs is feared. Often this move leads to early marriage of the girls, and sometimes their withdrawal

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worn by young unmarried women. It seems to be most commonly worn by older married village women.

from school is justified by the rationale that it is "*haram*" to educate girls with boys (American Friends Service Committee 1996).

None of the girls I spoke to were pulled out of school in the US, although almost all spoke of their lives in the US as restricted in one way or another. These restrictions ranged from merely not being allowed to date to leading an extremely limited social life outside of school hours mostly confined to the home, or when venturing out to the mall or the movies, always being accompanied by a family member. Most of the girls, however, were allowed some measure of social freedom in the US, but the limits of this freedom varied from girl to girl and was contingent on what their parents perceived as appropriate to a Muslim Palestinian upbringing in the US. Underlying what parents deemed acceptable were concerns for family honour and the need to protect the marriageability of their daughters within the Muslim, and preferably Palestinian, community.

From the age of seven, or even earlier, Laila remembered her mother telling her that if she lost her virginity before marriage the family would disown her. She didn't even know what "virginity" was then. Her mother was anxious about how popular American portrayals of heterosexual relations would influence Laila: whenever two people on television were shown kissing her mother would tell her that they were married, and that only married people kiss each other like that. Her father, on the other hand, tried to present arguments against dating based on logic: that young people continually date and break up, causing themselves heartache. Unless one means to get married it's a waste of time and energy to date someone. Laila herself said that she didn't date anyone because she saw too many relationships based on sexual exploitation of girls by their boyfriends. Laila was concerned about the potential emotional consequences in such a situation, especially since she claimed that her mother "brought me up to feel really sentimental about guys". Laila explained that one of the reasons she was so physically fit, and active and engaged in sports like karate and tae kwon do was because "I was always scared of guys dominating me because from a young age I knew they were stronger than me."

Nancy and her siblings had the usual prohibitions on dating, but they could go to movies and school games as long as they were all together. Her father drew the line at the girls attending men's wrestling matches, even though her brother competed in them. Nancy explained their freedom by the fact that their older sister, who was the first to go to high school and was elected class president, had a difficult time at school because she couldn't go to school events. Nancy's mother supported her, and helped convince Nancy's father that it wasn't fair to have children in the US and not let them do the fun things their friends were doing. This "turned the tide", and all the other siblings had an easier time and relatively more freedom.

Lana explained about the difficulties of having an "American" social life in the US: "It's really hard in [my hometown in the US] because it's a small town, I can't talk to guys [who are friends], they can't come into the store." But Lana managed to keep up friendships in the US and re-established them every summer: "My friends are really understanding. They know I don't drink and that I can't do a lot of the things they do."

Lana, Nancy, and others had some measure of social freedom in the US that permitted them experiences of "normal" American adolescence. However, some girls reported a lonely time in their US high schools. Riham told me she had initially looked forward to starting high school as a new beginning with the potential of finding older friends. She hoped that high school would provide a contrast to her junior high school experiences where she felt like an outcast. Once there, however, Riham found that she had no framework within which to be popular: she didn't drink, date, smoke, or go to parties or dances. Instead, she found herself associating with the other students who couldn't be or didn't want to be popular. She fast-tracked her way through high school a year early. Her lack of social life and non-participation in extra-curricular activities left her few options but to focus on her homework and academic progress.

Some girls contrasted and defined their dual identities on the basis of restrictions or lack thereof. Cindy explained:

> I always knew I was "Arabic-American". I had my Arabic ways and my American ways to follow....To be an Arabic person in America I couldn't go out with boys, I couldn't leave the house, go out at night, you know....[I asked her what her "American" ways were]. My American ways [big pause here]....I could leave the house with my friends, as long as my parents knew them....It was hard there [in the US] because it was a Muslim house....you couldn't do anything....everything was in your parents' hands.

However, Aisha was careful to differentiate between the restrictions she was subject to and her religious identity, claiming that she did not feel different because she was a "Muslim" but because she could not go to parties, have boyfriends, or go out with friends in the way that other girls her age at her school and in her neighbourhood were doing. Aisha did not remember being told that these things were prohibited, but she "always knew" it was so.

While dating and relations with non-related men are often not permitted, according to Siham Rashid Odeh, a counsellor who worked in an Arab-American community centre in Chicago's south-side, many of the girls she worked with dated behind their parents' backs. However, dating by these girls took on a mostly benign form, skipping school to be with their boyfriends or sometimes telling their parents they were going to the Center when in fact they were meeting their boyfriends. Sexual experience amongst the majority of the girls she worked with was limited to kissing. Odeh says that the first generation Arab-American girls she saw would most

often date immigrant Arab boys. These boys saw Arab-American girls as "easy" because they were American, while the girls were "fascinated" by the Arab boys (Interview, Beit Hanina, 10 October 1997).

A former teacher at the Friends Boys School, Alia el-Yassir, noted that English-speaking girls and "Arabic-speaking"[28] boys often "dated" each other: "It was known around the school that they were 'soft' on each other....they would walk around the school with each other." El-Yassir added: "I think there was a fascination for the English-speaking girls for the Arabic-speaking boys--they were 'the other' for each other." The boys and girls who "dated" each other came from different villages (Interview, Jerusalem, 8 October 1997). This may have been rooted in the need to protect the girls' reputations. It is possible that the girls felt that it was too dangerous for them to develop attractions for and relationships with boys from their own villages because of the increasing likelihood that they would be found out. In turn, the Arabic-speaking boys, understanding the intricacies of protecting girls' reputations and perceiving how untenable a relationship with an American-Palestinian girl from their own village is, might have been discouraged from developing such relationships. Another former teacher at the school, Dina Abou-El-Haj recalled that not all American-Palestinian girls "dated", and those who did not were critical of those who did, feeling that their counterparts' behaviour reflected badly on them. Some teachers were also critical of the American-Palestinians' dating behaviour, although not the local Palestinians' dating each other (because they were more discreet about it), during the *intifada.* The school was already under local Hamas scrutiny because of its co-educational makeup and its Christian nature. These teachers felt that the added complication of "dating" behaviour amongst some of its students potentially endangered the school (Interview, Ramallah, 25 April 1998).

The mutual attraction between the American-Palestinian girls and the local Palestinian boys "was the motivation to join extra-curricular activities: plays,*dabka,* and the yearbook--the yearbook was very important" (Alia el-Yassir, Jerusalem, 8 October 1997). These relationships were sexually quite innocent, and "dating" seemed mostly to constitute a shared attraction:

> There was a friendship element to all of this too that was very important....the Arabic-speaking boys would talk to the girls in a way they couldn't do with the Arabic-speaking girls....this never translated into dating outside of school--or if it did, we never saw it....it was never one-on-one at school [either. It was] always in the context of group activities (Alia el-Yassir, Jerusalem, 8 October 1997).

Indeed, el-Yassir noted, "I believe that 99% of them [English-speaking girls] were very innocent--probably hadn't got past kissing, if that."

Knowledge of sexual changes and experience was also a bond in that the local Palestinian boys felt comfortable talking about these things with the American-Palestinian girls, who if they did not possess experience at least had knowledge gleaned from high school health classes in the US. El-Yassir added that the local Palestinian girls were seen by both the American-Palestinian and the local Palestinian boys as "cold and immature" (Interview, Jerusalem, 8 October 1997).

A few of the girls I spoke to admitted to breaking their parents' restrictions on dating or other activities, and many spoke of being sorely tempted to do so. Linda said that sometimes she contemplated ideas of sneaking out with her friends or wished that she could do it, but then when she thought about it, she was glad that she didn't drink or date because of the consequences involved, such as pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases. Like many other girls, Linda said that her parents always couched the restrictions on the basis of their ethnicity: "My parents made it sound like 'I'm Palestinian, I'm Muslim, I'm special.'" However, in grade eight she had a "crush" on a boy in her class and wrote a note to her girlfriend about him. Their teacher intercepted the note and contacted Linda's home against all of her pleadings ("You don't understand, I'm Palestinian"). Luckily, Linda remembered, her mother received the phonecall and came down to the school where she was given the note by Linda's teacher. Her mother explained to Linda that "feelings are normal, just don't act on them....don't approach this boy and tell him how you feel, don't try to make a relation with him." Linda's mother never told Linda's father about it, for which Linda was grateful because, she said, he would have made a "big deal" about it ("How can you do this? You're Palestinian, you're Muslim").

Alia's friends were happy to accommodate her restrictions, including those on socializing with boys. Often they colluded in informing Alia's parents that she was invited to a "get-together" (which implied only female guests as opposed to a "party" which implied the inclusion of male guests). For the duration of the "get-togethers" whenever anyone came to the door the boys would hide in case it was Alia's parents. Alia said that it all contributed to the fun of the parties, and "my friends were more worried about it than I was."

Nadia felt that she was given a greater measure of freedom than a lot of Palestinian girls in the US: "My parents are really understanding." While she couldn't have boyfriends, or friends who were boys, she could go to the movies, and out with friends. I asked Nadia if she ever broke the rules, and she hesitated before replying that on occasion she did "stupid things", such as skipping school and sneaking out of the house, but she claims to never have had a boyfriend. I asked her why, and she responded: "Because eventually you know it's not going to work out. You know you're going

[28] The Friends Boys School uses the term "Arabic-speaking" to denote native-born and raised Palestinian

to be with an Arab....And in our religion there's the day of judgement where you're going to be punished." (Again, here in Nadia's narrative is the conflation of being Muslim with being Arab.)

While most of the girls I spoke to were reluctantly, if sometimes angrily, accepting of the social restrictions their parents set out for them in the US, almost all of them felt a deep sense of injustice over the fact that their brothers had more freedom than they, particularly in matters of dating and extra-familial socializing. Palestinian-American girls almost always experience more restrictions than Palestinian-American boys. Exacerbating this dynamic is the "special treatment" to which Palestinian-American boys are entitled, creating resentment and discontent amongst the girls, and conflicted feelings about their femininity (Cainkar 1991, 1994; Eisenlohr 1996). This double standard is rooted in the belief that boys cannot be controlled (Cainkar 1988, 1991), as well as the exigencies of the "honour code" and the restrictions on women marrying out of the Muslim community. Men face no such restrictions. One Arab-American girl, the object of community gossip in Chicago because of her unfeminine "grunge" appearance says:

> I'd rather be a guy, of course, because girls get treated differently....I don't really like being a girl. If I got the same privileges as them [her brothers] I wouldn't mind being a girl (American Friends Service Committee 1996).

As Lisa Majaj (1994, 72) notes about Arab-American men, they are often permitted to take on the privileges of both societies:

> ...male children of mixed marriages are often able to claim both the rights of Arab men and an indefinable freedom usually attributed to western identity. Although the cultural mix imposes its burdens, a boy's situatedness between Arab and American identities is not debilitating.

The girls had many stories illustrating this double standard. When she lived in theUS Alia never went to dances. One time her brother went to a school dance and she was surprised; her first thought was, "What happened to this 'We're different, we're Arab, we're Muslim' talk?" She immediately confronted her father and asked him what he would say if she had asked to go. His reply was, "I would have slapped you." In their last year in the US her younger brother was allowed to go to the school dance. Her father grudgingly told her that if she wanted to go, she could, but that her brother would keep an eye on her. Alia told me that she didn't want to go to the dances, but rather what she did want was a choice to make the decision herself. She was keenly aware of, and resented the differential treatment her brothers were entitled to, where her older brother was allowed to do anything, go anywhere, and had many girlfriends.

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students.

Anger at this kind of hypocrisy was shared by Lana who complained that if she did something to ruin her reputation her family would lose all trust and respect for her and she would lose all her freedom. "Guys can get away with anything and no one cares....it's so unfair," she observed. Ally was also angry: "It aggravates me sometimes that guys are allowed to do stuff that we aren't allowed to do, 'cause it's 'against our religion.'"

When I asked Nancy if her brothers suffered from the same restrictions on their activities in the US as she and her sisters did, she replied sarcastically, "Yeah, right." Her parents returned to Palestine when Nancy was still completing university, and she lived with her brother while she continued her degree: "My brother was strict in a way, but I had a little more freedom than I had in high school....My brother didn't want to be tied down to being my father."

Alia and Nancy's stories reveal not only that brothers potentially enjoy more freedom, but also authority over their sisters, even if the sisters are older. Two girls reported that theseexpectations coloured their relationships with their younger brothers. Laila began to note changes in her younger brother after their move to the West Bank, including an emotional distancing from herself and the taking up of more "macho" attitudes. Likewise, Sara reported that relations changed between her and her younger brother since moving to Palestine: "We used to be really close, but now he's going through this phase where he doesn't want to be with his sister." Even before their move to the West Bank, Laila's brother had been charged with the responsibility of "watching" Laila at school when her parents suspected her of having a boyfriend. Once living in the West Bank, Laila's brother also attempted to control her comportment. Apparently he was told by other boys at their high school that they wouldn't let their sister dress the way Laila did. According to Laila, because he knew that he couldn't tell her what to do directly, he went to their parents to have them tell her to change the way she was dressing. At the time of our interviews he was regularly trying to tell her what to wear and to eat more because "men in Palestine like women to be fatter than they do in the US."

In the West Bank even unrelated or remotely related males take on the authority to regulate female sexuality. Linda related to me that the *shabab* in her village will "test" girls by saying "things" (comments on their looks, their bodies, etc.) to them and if a girl in any way displays a smile, laughs, or makes even fleeting and inadvertent eye contact (she could be laughing with a friend, or not even paying attention) they interpret this to mean that she "likes it". The boys claim that they are only doing this to "test" the girls, but Linda was outraged: "Who gives them the right?"

Cindy quite succinctly outlined the differences between the rights and privileges enjoyed by girls and boys in West Bank villages:

> The bad thing about it [being a girl] is that she's not treated equally with the boys....my brother can go out [with his fiancée] when he's engaged. They're allowed to work and the girls aren't. They can take care of themselves but the girls get money from their parents. The boys, they're their own parents....I believe that a guy should have certain responsibilities. Some day he's going to get married and have kids and work for them. Girls here, they don't work. They get married and have kids and so the guy has more responsibility....If anything happens, it all goes back on him, not her. [I asked her if she's relieved she's not a "guy", given all of this responsibility.] In some ways I am and in some ways I'm not. I'm not because guys here have more freedom, but I am because they have more responsibility.

However, Cindy went on to describe the precise limitations to which girls are subject, and compared them to the relative freedoms that boys enjoy:

> They [boys] can go anywhere and no one is going to tell them, "No, you can't"....They can choose their wife, anyone they want. A girl can choose too, she can say, "Yes" or "No", but she can't go around and say, "I want that guy"....They can have whatever they want. It's all out there in front of them. But the girls can't have whatever they want. It's limited....Fathers say, "If he really wants this thing, let him try, and if it doesn't work it's a lesson for him"....but they want girls to be perfect. They don't want any problems because they're scared for her reputation....whatever a guy does, it's different. People forget, but for a girl, the rumour never goes away....Parents want to show the boy real life....they say he'll be more of a man if he learns from his mistakes, but a girl, she's not supposed to make mistakes from the beginning....A girl wherever she goes, has to take this into consideration.

Dalal said, "In my *balad* parents put their girls down...they let their sons be happy but not their daughters." By this she meant that sons are supported in what they want but daughters are discouraged, first of all, from wanting anything at all for themselves, and secondly, from attaining what they do want, particularly if it contradicts what their parents and elders want for them. This is particularly relevant to issues of marriage, education, and day-to-day freedom to socialise with friends and leave the village.

Alia said that she knew being a girl was going to be a "lifelong problem" from a young age, from the time she was in Palestine as a young girl. She remembered one day she had to stay in from playing to help her mother while her brothers were allowed to play outside. When she asked why, she was told that her brothers were "different". At the time of our meetings Alia complained that while she might be doing her homework and her brother only playing Nintendo, her mother asks her to help with the cooking or cleaning. When Alia asks her mother to get her brother instead, her mother accuses her of not wanting to help, of being lazy. Alia rhetorically asked me, "Why do I do this to myself?....Why do I bring this on to myself? [referring to her parents' berating her]."

While her father scrutinised the identities of those from whom she received letters in the US (her male friends sent her mail to her school or enclosed letters in girlfriends' letters), Alia's brother could openly receive mail from girls. When Alia protested against this to her younger brother, he informed her that their parents were afraid that she would marry one of her male friends. Alia

challenged, "Well, why aren't they afraid that you'll get married to one of your female friends?" Alia explained to me that according to her father, when things go "wrong", particularly in marital and sexual matters, it is the woman's fault and responsibility, and that it is women who chase after men rather than the other way around.

Nonetheless, some girls claimed not to have experienced unequal relations until their arrival in the West Bank. Linda told me, "The only time I felt a big difference between being a boy and being a girl was when I came here." Similarly, Dina's first experience of a gendered double standard was when visiting her parents' village in 1991. She was told that she could not play soccer on the field because she was a girl. However, because she was a visitor she was able to enjoy the "privilege" of going to watch the boys play. Linda said that in the US her parents always encouraged her to feel that she could do whatever boys did. As an example she pointed to her father teaching her to drive when she was twelve. Even in the West Bank she experienced the double standard more at the hands of her peers than from her parents: "I felt it from my classmates the most [what girls can/cannot do in Palestine]."

Aisha did not accept the status quo in the West Bank that she observed in her village. She said that she didn't understand how the women there, including her paternal grandmother whose husband emigrated to Latin America and took another wife there, could take the treatment they received from their husbands (divorce, polygamy, infidelity, abandonment, violence, etc.). Aisha saw a double standard at work in her own life too. She and her brother were treated equally until puberty, but at the time of our sessions she said that her brother "has a lot of rights I don't have [he was allowed to drive the car, go out, etc.]". When he would get into trouble her parents would say that "he made a lot of mistakes, but has come out a man." Her brother, she said, confided in her about girlfriends, but she told him nothing in return because she didn't trust him. Her feeling was that if she talked about a "guy" he "would kill me".

Aisha's paternal uncle Hassan, who acted as the head of the family when her father was not in the country, was always telling her, "You're a girl" as a way to refuse her permission to do things. He strongly upheld "separate rights" for girls and boys. Aisha regretfully reflected,

> My uncle and I used to argue about how free-minded my father allowed me to be. He believed that women's voices shouldn't be heard and likes to hear himself talk. Despite all this I truly love my uncle, I just wish he could learn to trust my gender [*sic*]. Although I've tried, I don't think he ever will.

Frequently, the level of American violence, particularly the perceived prevalence of rape and assault, is used as a justification for restrictions on Palestinian-American women in the US. In Palestine, it is believed, women can move more freely because shared values mean that rape is

not the threat that it is in the US (Cainkar 1994, 100).[29] The fear of violence in the US may be related not only to its actual incidence, as "[f]ear is not...necessarily most pervasive amongst the most vulnerable groups, or within the most crime-prone locales" (Smith 1989, 196),[30] but also to popular and prevalent media portrayals of American violence and to a sense of social isolation (Smith 1989, 197; Pain 1991, 424; McCarthy et al 1997). Certainly, fear of crime is increased when concern for children's welfare is a factor (Smith 1989, 206-7). The irony is that although sexual violence against women is far more likely to take place in the home, or the perpetrator be known to the women victims, fear of sexual violence is almost always linked to public space (Pain 1991). Fear of violent sexual crime, then, can be used as a mode of patriarchal control, especially when it is noted that "[w]hile men tend to protect home and person in response to fear of crime, women take social and lifestyle precautions which are mostly costly in terms of personal freedom" (Pain 1991, 420):

> This leads to the imposition of a code of unspoken rules about dress, behavior, lifestyle, sexuality, and female loyalty and passivity in relationships: women learn that there is a series of boundaries in the physical and social worlds which they must not cross if they wish to remain safe (Pain 1991, 423).

Several girls pointed to the prevalence of violent crime in urban US areas as the rationale for the restrictions placed on them, and indicated that they have more freedom of movement and social freedom in the West Bank than they enjoyed in the US. For instance, Cindy explained to me:

> I have much more freedom here than I did in America. I'm allowed to go out, anything, because my aunt trusts me....It's much less here, the chance of getting in danger [rape or kidnapping]....There's less pressure here....in America it was "don't do this, don't do that", but over here they [her parents] stopped....[Nonetheless] I would have to ask permission to go to another village....I don't think my aunt would let me go alone.

Note here the conflation of Cindy's aunt "trusting" her and the lesser incidence of reported violent and sexual crime in the West Bank. The implication is that it would be Cindy's fault if she were to be attacked or hurt.

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[29] Cainkar points out that this is a perception, but not necessarily the reality in the West Bank. Aisha and I both remember the rash of kidnapping/rapes of Palestinian girls on their way home from school that occurred in the central West Bank during the spring and summer of 1993 (Al-Fajr issues during May-July 1993). To my knowledge, there are no accurate crime statistics collected by the Palestinian police, or by the previous Israeli police, on the incidence of sexual assaults in the West Bank. In fact, it would be near impossible to collect such statistics, even with adequate data collection systems, given the social stigma attached to sexual crime victims that persists in Palestinian society. The Women's Center for Legal Aid and Counselling operates a hotline for women who are victims of domestic violence, and they report that many of their calls are from incest victims. They also receive many calls from women seeking aid in securing abortions. According to the director and staff at the centre, many of these callers claim that they were raped, but few follow up with counselling or want to press charges or seek compensation (Interviews with Maha Abu-Dayyeh and Iman Saleh, Shu'fat, 14 February 1996).

[30] Also see Pain (1991, 416) who emphasises the correlation between fear of crime and gender.

Khadija said that she felt "left out" socially in the US, and that the restrictions she was subject to there were because of her parents' fear of crime:

> Over there [in the US] everyone was allowed out....they [her parents] were scared over there because of all the kidnappings and stuff....And you know how it is over there [in the US], there's always pep rallies and dances....we couldn't go.

Dalal said that her mother didn't want her to return to the US because she was afraid for her safety. Dalal's father was murdered and Dalal's mother did not want the same thing to happen to her.

Many parents felt that their daughters were safer in the West Bank, not only because of the lesser prevalence of random violent crime,[31] but also because Palestinians are all Arabs and mostly Muslim, who, parents rationalised, all share the same values and beliefs. "Here I have much more freedom because my parents trust people because they are Arab", explained Aisha. Nonetheless, Aisha also saw the contradictions in this attitude. In the summer of 1993 there was a rash of kidnappings and rapes of girls on their way home from school, sexual harassment on the streets is common, and periodically one hears about sexual assaults of women on the streets or in taxis. As Aisha's and other girls' experiences illustrate, they are sometimes the objects of sexual harassment experienced in the West Bank at a level never encountered in the US.

Indeed, the imperative for increased control over body movements and language imposed on and embodied by girls in the West Bank were themselves experienced by Aisha as violence, who experienced a rude initiation once she moved to the West Bank when she was eleven. Her older paternal cousin instructed her on her comportment, told her to look down at all times, not to touch her hair, and to "fix" her walk: "My hands would always be shaking and my face and shoulders hunched." Her cousin chastised her for her movements if they were not contained, and Aisha was strictly instructed not to make eye contact with boys or men because it would "give them ideas". Aisha explained all of this by saying that "girls were more protected then [during the *intifada*]." It was a contradictory time for Aisha, she said, because it was at this age that she began thinking for herself. But it was also then that her parents began to place more restrictions on her. The final straw was complete "disillusionment" with Palestine when she was in grade nine. Her cousin began spreading rumours that she had a boyfriend at school. Aisha also said that it was then that she saw that "guys" weren't just *intifada* heroes but could be "jerks" as well. What made her see this?

> I was ignored by men up till the 9th grade. Then I began being asked out and told by men what they wanted to do to me. It shocked me! I was young and innocent and looked

[31] But not, however, a lower incidence of political violence. I was explaining to a colleague how Palestinian parents living in the US frequently send their daughters back to the West Bank during their adolescence, and she remarked, "What an interesting notion of 'protection'--to send your children to a country at war."

> at the men of Palestine as heroes. I was still living in the romantic, political Palestine that had been up thrown [*sic*] by war. I guess I had been sheltered by my parents' rules and regulations and then let out to discover the world as it was, or had become. It was too much, all this male attention at one time when I hadn't been used to it.

Aisha went so far as to say that she suffered trauma as a result of being a girl in the West Bank during the *intifada*,[32] and felt that returning to the US for her grade ten year helped her to recuperate from the negative effects of the repression she experienced in the West Bank. She had suffered from a situation where she felt that girls had no rights, couldn't go anywhere, and where their every movement was scrutinized. By the time she came back to the US, Aisha said, she walked with her head down and arms stiffly and straight by her side. Finally, a male student at her school in the US asked her what was wrong with her. He told her that she should walk with her head up: "Aren't you proud to be an Arab?" he asked. As a result of that year away she felt much more relaxed and able to be herself. Although the sexual harassment had not stopped, she became much more pragmatic about it:

> Being female in Palestine means being a constant target for male advances. Girls aren't often smart enough to make their own minds up. Not everyone treats us like this, but we do get it often.

Ally has suffered sexual harassment in Palestine, and was still feeling the immediate emotional impact of it:

> Here the guys don't stop [harassing you]....sometimes they try to touch you....I've been hit on my chest, and one time lower....It makes you feel embarrassed....I've never been touched like that before.

She started "talking back" to boys who were giving her problems, and during our interviews she reported that they had stopped saying "dirty things" to her.

The high incidence of sexual harassment on the streets, in shared service taxis, and in the classroom and schoolground caused several of the girls with whom I spoke to be disillusioned with Palestinian life. These experiences contrasted sharply with how their parents had portrayed their homeland while in the US. Many of the girls were angry or confused about the characterisations of Palestinian life as safe, sexually conservative, and guided by Muslim principles, because they contradicted their actual lived experiences of sexual harassment there. Ironically, none of the girls reported similar rates of sexual harassment in their neighbourhoods and schools in the US.

Nonetheless, the fears of sexual and physical violence, the concerns about adolescent "American" social life, and the restrictions that are prompted by these fears and concerns as

discussed above, can lead to family problems in the US and the desire on the parents' part to send their children back to Palestine. A survey of Arab-Americans in Chicago revealed that 60% of those questioned had family problems that they feel ill-equipped to solve, with a majority of these concerning their children (AAAN n.d.). One researcher notes that both a generational and cultural gap exists between immigrant Muslim Arab parents and their children born and/or raised in North America:

> The assumption that the group's cultural heritage can be preserved by maintaining the socio-cultural customs of the old country, though not unique to Arab Muslim immigrants, is seen here as one of the reasons for the inability of American Muslim immigrants to span the gap between the old and the new generations. That is, no matter how tolerant the old are to the young or how compromising the young generation is to their parents' socio-cultural customs, they will never be able to meet on the ideational level. The parents' ideas, sentiments, traditions, and interests are not the same as those of their American-reared (Barazangi 1991, 143).

Some parents choose to resolve the problem of "protecting" their children by sending them back to the Middle East. In one study, Arab-Canadians "indicated a wish that they could send their daughters to the Middle East during their adolescence, because the teenage years in Canada are seen as particularly trying for parents" (Abu-Laban 1979, 146). One Palestinian-American parent "sends his children back to the West Bank for schooling during what he calls the dangerous age in the U.S., from twelve to sixteen" (Christison 1989, 21), while another says:

> I don't like to raise my kids here and have my daughter have a boyfriend. No way. This is your dignity. That's the major problem for American Palestinians, to have kids in this country (Christison 1989, 21).

A real or perceived violation of the rules on dating by Palestinian-American women can result in "return" (Cainkar 1994, 100; Eisenlohr 1996, 266). This most certainly was the case with many of the girls I spoke to. In fact, even the danger of the prospect of dating encouraged parents to take this action. Several were the oldest daughters in the family, and their attainment of puberty or early adolescence prompted the family to relocate their daughters to West Bank. Some others were returned with their older sisters who had reached the "dangerous age". Other parents had worries that their daughters already had boyfriends in the US, either because this was actually the case, or because of the company they were keeping. Even the appearance or innocent expression of sexuality can prompt concern in parents resulting in measures to "return" their daughters. For instance, I was recounting to a former teacher of the Friends that I had been waiting to meet two girls and had seen them come from a distance: sauntering, walking freely, moving their arms, heads, and torsos, laughing with each other and oblivious to their surroundings. I said to my friend, "I don't think I've ever seen girls move like that here....They were walking as if they

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[32] Kevorkian (1993) discusses the feelings of powerlessness and terror around the possibilities of sexual harassment and assault by Israeli soldiers that adolescent Palestinian girls suffered during the *intifada*.

owned the street." The former teacher, a Palestinian who had lived most of her life abroad, quickly rejoined, "Yes, and you can see how, with their daughters moving like that in America, that they would be afraid and send them here."

On the other hand, boys are often "returned" because of their involvement, perceived or real, in delinquent or gang activity in the US. Alia el-Yassir explained:

> A lot of the boys come from gangs, or have partaken in some illegal activity. Parents get worried, and that's why they're back. So that explains the boys (Interview, Jerusalem, 8 October 1997).

The girls offered varying reasons for, and backgrounds to, their "return". Lana's parents never talked about going back until they actually did so in 1991. Her parents decided that it would be best to come back for the sake of their daughters. Lana's older sister had "problems" in high school, but was finished by the time the family moved, and Lana's other sister was just entering high school. In 1991, when they moved, Lana was starting grade seven. Dalal's paternal uncles wanted her and her sister to be brought back to Palestine to avoid the risk of them marrying "blacks or Americans." Dalal's mother didn't want her to return to the US "on my own responsibility" becauseshe was afraid that Dalal would go out and do something "I'm not supposed to do." Linda's parents decided to move to the West Bank because of Linda's engagement to a distant relative and fellow Palestinian-American who was resident in the US when she was fourteen. Her family did not believe in long engagements, but they also wanted Linda to finish her high school education. The solution was to move to Palestine, thus separating Linda from her fiancé, to ensure that "nothing happens". Alia did have a boyfriend from whom her parents wanted to separate her. Nadia's and Laila's friends, involved in gangs and the heavy metal headbanger crowd at school, deeply worried their parents. Whether innocent or not of any sexual involvement, Khadija and Ally spoke for all of the girls when they told me, "A lot of people here think they [our parents] brought us back [to Palestine] because we did something wrong [in the US]."

Finally, several of the girls suspected that their parents relocated them to Palestine in order to secure them marriages. Alia told me of her first weeks after returning to the West Bank where everyone greeted her with, "Welcome to the bride."[33] She was angry about it and took as further proof that her parents brought her to Palestine to get married the fact that shortly after their return her parents bought her contact lenses. Active in sports in her high school, she told me that she had begged her parents repeatedly for contact lenses in the US, but it was only in the West Bank where she didn't engage in any sports that she was finally granted her wish. In fact, it is common practice for Palestinian parents resident in the US to bring their daughters to visit the West Bank during the

summer "wedding season" in the hopes of getting them married (Heiberg, Øvensen 1993, 286). All but one of the girls told me that they had to marry Muslims, preferably Arabs, and most favourably, Palestinians.[34]

Regardless of the reasons for their "return" almost all of the girls answered my question, "Why did you move here?', with the answer, "To learn more about our religion." At first I took this response at face value. It was not until I repeatedly received vague answers to my question, "What have you learned", about attendance at *din* (religion) class (which many of the girls also had access to in the US), or even the blunt answer that they had not learned anything new about Islam, that I re-evaluated this answer. It became apparent that "learning about our religion" was an idiomatic reply denoting preservation, maintenance, or restoration of family "honour". Here again is the amalgamation of Islam with cultural and familial codes and with "Palestinianness". Kandiyoti (1991, 37) argues that "one of the major weaknesses in our theorizing about women in the Middle East stems from a conflation of Islam, as ideology and practice, with patriarchy." She demonstrates that practices rooted in patriarchal configurations of social and family relations in Muslim societies vary across place and time, thus problematising the fusion of Islam with patriarchy. Yet ironically, the girls I spoke to made the same associations that Kandiyoti (1991) works to destabilise, that is, they conflated Islam with Palestinian notions of honour maintenance.

This striking association on the part of the girls between Islam, honour, and "Palestinianness" begs questions about relations with Palestinian Christians and what being "Christian" signifies in Palestine. While Cainkar (1988) mentions that some Muslim Palestinians in Chicago had friendly relations with their Christian counterparts, only one of the girls I spoke to mentioned knowing any Christian Arabs in the US (Khadija said, "Their parents were stricter on them than mine were on me!"). Most of the girls I spoke to knew few or no other Arabs in their neighbourhoods and schools. Christian Palestinian-Americans in the US tend to live in separate neighbourhoods from their Muslim counterparts (AAAN n.d.; Abraham 1983; Abraham, Abraham, Aswad 1983; Cainkar 1994). Thus, Palestinian-American girls' models for what it was to be Arab and Palestinian were their parents and their families. As for the girls' parents, their Palestinian origins lay in West Bank Ramallah-area Muslim villages. While there are a few West Bank Christian villages, most Palestinian Christians claim their origins in the cities of Jerusalem, Bethlehem, and Ramallah. Finally, Christians tended to cluster in the urban middle- and upper-middle business and professional classes in Palestine (Tsimhoni 1983). Thus, the girls' Muslim Palestinian parents were separated from Palestinian Christians in Palestine by virtue of their separate sectarian affiliations, as well as by class and locale. In the US, the same set of factors seems to apply, where Christians

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[33] Compare this to Granqvist's (1931, 23) finding in Artas village in the West Bank during the 1920s that when a girl was born she was welcomed with the refrain "Blessed is the Bride".
[34] The issue of marriage will be more completely treated in chapter five.

form the bulk of early Palestinian immigrants, and thus tend to be more integrated and socio-economically successful in US society where they also have their own separate Palestinian affiliations, one of the most notable being the Ramallah Clubs.

There are also certain connotations to being Christian in Palestine. For one, their Christian status also confers on them a link with the Christian-dominated west, which is popularly perceived to be anti-Islam, through various church institutions in Jerusalem and the rest of the West Bank. Many Christians in the West Bank themselves feel this link with the west, as has been made clear to me by several conversations with Christians in Ramallah where they asserted an affiliation with me as a western Christian-heritage woman that is superior to their Muslim neighbours' claims, no matter what their class or background. Christian institutional support has also worked to disproportionately bolster and maintain the material and class advantages that Christians enjoy in Palestine. Israeli policy-makers also seek to exploit any sectarian division that exists between Palestinian Christians and Muslims,[35] aided by the accusation, erroneous in my opinion, from some quarters that Christians were not as active as Muslims in the *intifada* (Tsimhoni 1983; Jadallah, Collins 1998; Seitz 1998b). Finally, as a response to the 1967 Israeli occupation, Sarah Graham-Brown (1984b, 253) claims, "Religion is seen as a defence against Israeli attempts to undermine their society". The activities of Hamas and Islamic Jihad during the *intifada* and their more recent activism in the wake of the largely discredited Oslo Accords and "peace process" bolster the association of Islam with Palestinian nationalism (although this is seen as problematic by many Palestinians).

Despite these differences between the Christian and Muslim Palestinian communities, there are many more points of shared experience and outlook. Palestinian Arab nationalism has been a great unifier in the West Bank, and historical fictive alignments to Qaisi or Yemeni factions[36] in the West Bank "cut across village/city dichotomies and often united Christian and Muslim families" (Tamari 1982, 181). Aside from these factional and political alliances, a shared cultural affiliation and history are binding factors. For instance, a close Christian Palestinian friend said to me about all Arabs in general, "We share a history, and even a religion". By this he meant that Christian Palestinians share with their Muslim compatriots a shared culture and history that is heavily infused with Islamic influence. Intending to make the same sort of point, I once heard a prominent Christian Palestinian academic and activist claim that he was a "Muslim Christian". Thus, many Christian and Muslim Palestinians believe that they share a cultural affinity that overrides sectarian

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[35] The Palestinian Society for the Protection of Human Rights and the Environment's (LAW) report (1998), authored by Jennifer Moorehead, is a particularly detailed and interesting discussion of the involvement of the US Christian religious and political right, their alliance with Israeli interests and their identification with Zionism, and the spread of unsubstantiated rumours of persecution of Christians in the West Bank.
[36] These are the two tribal groups from which Palestinians from the West Bank trace their origins (Shaheen 1982; Tamari 1982).

differences (Jadallah, Collins 1998). Included in this shared culture are notions of "honour" and the importance and means of maintaining it. Palestinian Christians and their Muslim counterparts see a difference between themselves and western Christians in this regard,[37] and it may be in this difference that "honour" becomes associated with religion or with Islam.

While Warnock (1990, 110) suggests that shame is a modern notion in Palestine, its counterpart "honour" was well-understood by the girls I met who referred to it in English by the idiom "reputation".[38] Although subject to the rigours of its preservation in the US, most of the girls had not considered "reputation" as an explicit entity until moving to the West Bank. While they understood that their parents imposed social restrictions on them in the US because they were "different", "Muslim", "Arab" and/or "Palestinian", in light of their isolation from Palestinian, Arab, and Muslim communities in the US and from their families and community in the West Bank, they in effect had no immediate community within which to protect their "reputations" in the US. Only once in the West Bank did it become clear why the restrictions were necessary or important in their parents' eyes, and became important and significant in their own estimation as well. As mentioned in chapter two, Lana claimed that she and her American-Palestinian peers in the West Bank didn't understand the sense of the restrictions their parents imposed on them in the US until moving to the West Bank.

Preservation of the "reputations" of American-Palestinian girls is a particularly pressing matter, "contaminated" as they are by American residence and assumed acculturation. The following quote, taken from a woman whose mother is American and father is Palestinian, and who grew up in Amman, is equally relevant to the lives of the girls to whom I spoke:

> for girls, relegated to the mother's sphere, the implications of a western identity in an Arab context can be so problematic that claustrophobic familial restrictions are often the result. Although modesty is required of all girls, those with American blood are at particular risk and must be doubly protected, so that there is neither opportunity nor basis for gossip (Majaj 1994, 72).

Despite feeling that she had more freedom in Palestine than in the US, Cindy was frustrated with the double standard she sometimes felt was imposed on her. She offered the example of her brother and his fiancée and their freedom to go out with each other into Ramallah. When she said to her aunt that she was looking forward to becoming engaged and going out with her fiancé, her aunt replied, "No, you can't. We don't do that." Cindy said, "I was so angry when she said

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[37] However, I would argue that western culture does hold certain notions that are similar to the Mediterranean "honour and shame complex". Indeed, the voluminous literature on honour in Greece (Herzfeld 1985), Italy (Giovannini 1987; Goddard 1987), and Spain (Brandes 1980) serves to indicate that the importance of honour is not restricted to Muslim societies.

[38] It should be noted here that several of them did not know of the term "honour" used in the anthropological literature, and only understood "honour" by the idiom "reputation".

that." Note here the association of engagement with freedom of movement, albeit accompanied with her future fiancé. Cindy's brother was engaged to a Palestinian-born and raised girl. As it is unlikely that her brother would be marrying a girl with a bad reputation, it was probably the case that Cindy's aunt felt that she must be particularly careful with Cindy's reputation since she is American-Palestinian.

Clothing, as part of public presentation of the self, plays a significant part in how American-Palestinian girls are expected to maintain family honour in the West Bank. In the previous chapter I discussed how clothing marked the girls as "American", but clothing also carries other meanings for Palestinian observers. Several of the girls mentioned to me that they must be more careful than they ever were in the US about what they wear in the West Bank, and some must pass the scrutiny of their mother's eye before leaving the house. Nadia answered my question, "What is different about living here?" with, "Well, I can't wear most of my clothes." By this she meant that she could not wear the more revealing or tightly-fitting items in her wardrobe.

Tight-fitting clothes and obvious makeup are worn by Palestinian girls, but usually only those from the urban middle and upper-middle classes, or apparently, by "Christians". This latter characterisation was revealed to me when I went shopping with two Muslim friends at a Ramallah shop that sold very modern, European-style, sophisticated clothing. Many of the items were revealing, close-fitting, and short. My friends were shopping for outfits to wear to an upcoming wedding. One, who wore the *mandil* and *jilbab* (a long, plain, light coat-dress in dark or dull colours worn over the clothes when in public), was from a nearby village, and the other was of refugee origin but lived with her family in a lower-middle class flat in Ramallah. We laughed when Samia held up a short, low cut, backless dress and joked that it would go well with her *mandil.* When it became apparent that neither of my two friends were going to purchase a dress there I asked them who buys and wears such clothing. They answered that Christians were the main consumers. I don't know if that is true or not. I was first introduced to the shop by another Muslim friend, and on other occasions have met Muslim friends and acquaintances there who were busily trying on outfits. I know Christian and Muslim women who wear heavy makeup and revealing clothing, and I know Christian and Muslim women who do not. In the summer a small number of women and girls, both Christian and Muslim, wear sleeveless tops, and if they are driving cars it is possible to see women in shorts, quickly jumping out of their vehicles to drop into a grocery to pick up a few needed pantry items. However, when I recounted my shopping story to a friend, she answered with one of her own. My friend Sandra, an Anglo-Canadian, is married to a Christian Palestinian and worked with a large Palestinian health NGO in the West Bank. One day when she was working with village health workers in the northern West Bank the women asked her who her husband was. When she told them some confusion ensued. They had assumed that her husband was a Muslim, because as they said to her, "You're

Christian, but you're modest [i.e. she wore modest clothing]" (Personal communication with Sandra Ballantyne, Ramallah, 25 April 1998).

I think that rather than marking sectarian membership, to wear more revealing western clothing signifies that one is from a particular class, a privileged and perhaps even educated one.[39] For some women, certain values might also be rolled into their manner of dress, such as "modern" lifestyles and attitudes or subscription to feminist beliefs. To be well and expensively dressed in tasteful short skirts, trousers, shirts and blouses, and jackets, or to be dressed in tight fitting and revealing clothing, as well as the more usual jeans, shirts, t-shirts, skirts, and so on, all constitute "western" dress. The majority of girls and women I saw in the Ramallah area wore western dress in some form or another, but usually in loose-fitting guises. For example, it is common to see adolescent girls dressed in close-fitting jeans flared at the bottom, leggings, or tights, platform-style shoes and boots on their feet, with loose shirts, t-shirts, or sweaters worn over top, covering the outline of the waist and hips. Women, too, wear skirts, trousers, or even leggings, and blouses or sweaters that tend to be loose-fitting. To wear western clothing in this manner--modestly--then, is not necessarily "western" in the way that Nader (1989) describes the meaning of "western" in the Middle Eastern context as promiscuous. However, dress is not limited to western forms in Palestine and women and adolescent girls wear a variety of styles of dress in the West Bank. It is common in the village and in Ramallah streets to see women wearing the traditional embroidered *thobe*. Older women tend to wear the *thobe* with a headcovering composed of an opaque scarf tied tightly around their hair and a long, gauzy, flowing white scarf over top. Middle aged women (very young women and girls do not seem to wear the *thobe*, except as ceremonial dress) might wear an opaque, white headscarf that is loosely wrapped around their necks and shoulders, or even left loose and flowing behind their backs. The *thobe* is traditional village wear and is usually only worn by women with village origins. Thus, Palestinian women wear western dress, "traditional" dress, and as I will discuss in the following chapter, Islamic and combinations of Islamic and western dress are also worn.

What western forms of dress signify about and for the wearer is also contingent on the status of her family in the community. For instance, a woman or girl of a well-known and respected family would hardly be accused of promiscuity for wearing a skirt cut to her knees in the city. Western dress not worn in the loose local style, that is, expensive and tasteful dress that can include sleeveless tops and short skirts, signifies that one is from the urban upper-middle class. This dress, in terms of its style and the way it is worn, is characteristic of "aristocracies of taste, people in secure, established hierarchies [who] invest in prestigious styles which can only be acquired over a long time" (Bourdieu 1984, cited in Lindisfarne-Tapper, Ingham 1997, 31).

Traditionally this has also tended to mean that one is Christian, as they previously dominated this class, although this is no longer the case. There are also those who aspire to the lifestyle and values of the urban upper-middle class, but are not actually of that class. They also might wear western dress that is close-fitting and "faddish", and a lot of jewellery and makeup. As I mentioned in the previous chapter, American-Palestinian girls are sometimes contemptuous of the tastes and styles of these Palestinians. Having said all of this, I have to add the caution that in the Ramallah area dress does not always exactly coincide with class. There are exceptions, and the boundaries can be extremely blurry. A distinction must also be made between the actual socio-economic class and character of the wearer and what Palestinians believe certain forms of dress mean about the class, religion, and character of the wearer. Also, different Palestinians will read dress in different ways, and this can depend on their own class and character.

Finally, there is also the association of western, close-fitting dress with Israelis. Young Israeli women in particular are locally notorious for their immodest dress. For instance, one great-aunt of an American-Palestinian returnee told her niece that after the 1967 Israeli occupation of the West Bank "[a] lot of the younger Palestinian generation started imitating the Jews, dressing like them, acting like them, losing the Palestinian culture" (Hallak 1995). In all of this it must be recognized that Israeli women act as boundary markers of "Israeliness" to their Palestinian observers, and the characterisation of Israeli women's dress as immodest, with the associated aspersion of immorality, is similar to how the Alwad 'Ali Bedouin in Egypt view Egyptian women (Abu-Lughod 1986) and how Sunni Muslim Turkish migrants in Germany view both their Alevi women compatriots and German women (Mandel 1989a). However, I suspect that this association of western dress with Israelis and "Israeliness" has abated somewhat in the post-Oslo, post-*intifada* era with the influx of Tunis-based Palestinians, who are deemed by many of the local population to be just as immodest as any Israeli. However, this new in-migration has resulted in the erection of boundaries between "insider" Palestinians (those from the West Bank, including Jerusalem, and Gaza) and "outsider" Palestinians (especially those from Tunis, but also those from throughout the Palestinian diaspora). In this sense, the link between "western" dress and immodesty might been reinforced. These new boundaries between different categories of Palestinians have their roots in the local resentment of the "outsiders" arriving in Palestine and gaining immediate access to high level positions within the PNA to the exclusion of*intifada* activists and other prominent local Palestinians who made considerable sacrifices during the uprising and stayed *samad* (steadfast) throughout the Israeli occupation. The sometimes ostentatious shows of wealth and access to resources by the "outsiders", such as mobile telephones and brand new Mercedes and BMWs, does nothing to alleviate this resentment. The "outsiders", many of whom have lived much of their lives or exile in Arab environments in the

[39] For a discussion on the analysis of the meanings of dress in the Middle East see Lindisfarne-Tapper and

comparably more liberal societies of Beirut and Tunis, or in the more materially advanced countries of the Gulf, tend to regard West Bank and Gazan society as "backwards", sometimes ridiculously conservative, and boring (Hamzeh-Muhaisen 1998a; Mar'i 1998).

Given this complex context in which dress is situated, it is easy to understand why American-Palestinian girls' rap culture-influenced clothing (running shoes, baggy jeans, with baggy jerseys or shirts, frequently tucked in) might be acceptable in their parents' eyes and appear not to violate any norm in the girls' view but would inexorably mark them as "American" because it is not consistent with any local *style* of wearing western clothing. Their dress also does not mark them as from the urban upper-middle class whose styles are more tailored and adult or more European (as opposed to American) in style. And American-Palestinian girls certainly do not wear the close-fitting, less expensive, styles of dress favoured by those who want to emulate the urban upper-middle class or seem more cosmopolitan and sophisticated. American-Palestinian style is pronouncedly American, casual, and adolescent. While the American-Palestinian style is modest, it is not "classy", and so does not signal to local Palestinians their belonging to the urban American upper-middle class. As we will see in the following chapter, wearing some form of Islamic dress is also an option for American-Palestinian girls, and this also carries various meanings, not least of which is the maintenance of family honour: "Veiling also, by virtue of its public nature as a type of performance, is linked to the concept of honor" (MacLeod 1991, 99-100).

Now returning to issues of comportment highlighted by Cindy above, many of the other girls pointed to the behaviour of local Palestinian girls as much freer than their own, often in surprised and disapproving tones. They were invariably frustrated with what they experienced as a double standard of expectation around their comportment as compared to those imposed on their counterparts who were born and brought up in the West Bank.[40] One of the most obvious barometers of this double standard is the clothing that the two groups, American and local, wear as well as what behaviours the two groups are permitted. In fact, in my own observation and through contacts with adolescent girls native to the West Bank, particularly those living in urban areas (such as Ramallah or Jerusalem) and of upper-middle class professional and business-owning parents, I have seen that many dress in tight jeans or short skirts and tops, go to mixed parties where alcohol is freely served, and have boyfriends.

The junior-senior end-of-year party at the Friends School serves as an interesting example to highlight the differences between the two groups of girls. One day I arrived at the school and was apprehended by one of the senior American-Palestinian girls--someone I had not previously

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Ingham (1997).

spoken to individually--who told me that she and the other girls in her class were upset because the Arabic-speaking students were arranging to have the dinner after the party at a bar-restaurant in Ramallah that had a particularly outrageous reputation as a pick-up joint and venue where drunkenness was the norm and spontaneous strip-tease dancing amongst its inebriated female customers took place. Manal was upset because the choice of this venue meant that few if any of her classmates would be permitted by their parents to attend the dinner after the dance. This was the only dance of the year at the school, and held particular importance for the American-Palestinian students as it was in celebration of their graduation from the school. In the US, high school graduation is an important event that marks entry into full adulthood, and as such, is made much of and celebrated by American students, parents and family, and communities at large with large parties and expensive gifts. It is a rite of passage. American-Palestinian students universally felt robbed of this experience and resentful that the school and the Palestinian community did not share their sense of graduation as a landmark event. In this light, then, it seemed wrong to Manal and her classmates that they would be deprived of full participation in the celebrations. Manal made clear her resentment that the local girls would be able to attend, while she and her friends would have to sit at home.

At the party itself two things distinguished the American from the local students. The first was that the Arabic-speaking students engaged in mixed dancing, Arabic-style. The chaperones at the party, male and female teachers, also danced together. But the American girls only danced with each other, also Arabic-style, in twos or in groups, and enthusiastically pulled each other, myself, and a young female American teacher onto the floor to dance. The American boys were left to watch, dance with each other, or dance with local girls or their sisters. Second, while many of the local girls arrived at the party wearing short or close-fitting and revealing dresses, the American girls were dressed in long skirts or dresses, with full or half-sleeves, and modest necklines. This dress, I realized later when I attended a engagement "shower" for one of the American-Palestinian girls with an exclusively female American-Palestinian guest-list (except for myself and two teachers), was not worn simply because there were men and boys at the party. While the covered girls felt free to remove their headscarves at the all-girls shower, despite the warm, sunny, summer day, the dress of all of the girls present was modest. In fact, the American teacher mentioned above said privately to me that she was surprised at how the girls were dressed because it reminded her of clothing her mother would wear to a similar occasion. It was clear that the girls had dressed up for a party--the clothes they wore were not those they typically wore to school or for everyday--but again, there were long hemlines, sleeves instead of bare shoulders, and covered backs and high necklines.

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[40] As I discussed in chapter three.

The dress and behaviour of American-Palestinian and local girls indicate several differences between them. First, they are separated by differences in residence locale and class. The local girls at the Friends School largely come from urban professional and business-owning upper-middle class families while the American-Palestinian girls come from village families whose parents made good in the US. The local girls' family backgrounds afford them a greater degree of latitude when it comes to dress and behaviour, which largely depends on family support and their own practices of discretion. Alia el-Yassir, a former teacher at the Friends School, noted that Palestinian-born and raised boys and girls pursue dating relationships that are similar to those practised in the west, including attending mixed parties where there is alcohol. She told me that while some of these girls are sexually active to varying degrees, they are "incredibly discreet", in contrast to American-Palestinian girls who tend not to be. El-Yassir also explained that it is perhaps the case that because Palestinian-born and raised girls "have their 'respect' already" they have more latitude to engage in such relations and activities. By this she meant that they had already established their good reputations, and their families are well-known and respected in the community (Interview, Jerusalem, 8 October 1997). It is not incumbent on local girls to prove their good reputations, as it is for the American-Palestinian girls, whose American background casts automatic doubt on their comportment and morality. Additionally, as I discussed at the beginning of this chapter, class is linked to honour, and the local girls' urban upper-middle class background probably already affords them some measure of good reputation. The American-Palestinian girls' families, while perfectly respectable, do not possess the social stature of their local classmates' families. Besides, local urban girls are subject to urban expectations only while American-Palestinian girls, who cross the village-city boundary daily, must negotiate village expectations that are already compromised by the girls' regular urban contact.

However, the degree to which local girls possess social freedom does not mean that in all cases their parents are aware of, or condone, dating and drinking alcohol. I refer here to the fact that these girls' families are well-known and embedded members of their communities. Their daughters are their responsibility, and any insult directed at these local girls can be potentially answered by their families. In other words, their families act as a shield, or as a "protection", that provide the cover for dating, drinking, or other activities involving mixed-sex company or more revealing dress. At the same time, an implicit understanding exists between girls and their families that their social freedom is extended to the extent that daughters and sisters do not put fathers and brothers in the position of having to demonstrate their control over them. For instance, a friend who comes from a Ramallah-area village explained to me in great detail the intricacies of her negotiations with her brothers. This girl, a young woman by North American standards, worked at a professional job, lived with her sister in Ramallah, had a boyfriend who spent nights with her, frequently went to mixed parties, drank alcohol, and smoked cigarettes--all

with her brothers' knowledge and protection. She also observed particular limits around styles of dress and other modes of public representation and comportment, such as not smoking on the street or in front of men, and not drinking alcohol in public. She was very discreet, but also known to be sociable and active in her own circles.

Her situation, and those of other local girls', reminded me of Michael Gilsenan's (1976) findings in Lebanon, where he found that honour is a complex system that entails a great deal of avoidance:

> To define a situation publicly in terms of honor and to have that definition endorsed as socially authentic by the relevant performers rules out alternative choices to a large extent and entails serious risk and disruption. Within Beit Ahmad, therefore, much effort goes into preventing an event's being categorized in these ultimate terms (Gilsenan 1976, 200-1).

Gilsenan (1976, 205) found that in a case study of adultery the whole village colluded with the husband in his ostensible non-recognition of the fact: "To acknowledge infidelity would be desecration of his total social self unless he killed the wife and challenged the alleged offender [a highly regarded member of his own family]." Finally, Bruce Dunne (1998, 9) refers to a recent study conducted on the family in Cairo where it was found that "social taboos and silences relating to sexual behaviour provide a space of negotiability....[accommodating] discreet incidents of otherwise publicly condemned illicit sexual behavior--adultery, homosexuality, premarital sex--provided that paramount values of family maintenance and reproduction and supporting social networks are not threatened." While I would not say that avoidance is practised to the same degree in the West Bank as Gilsenan found in his Lebanese village or perhaps in Cairo, I believe that these findings of the practice of avoidance are important and relevant to any understanding of the maintenance of honour in the Ramallah area. Further, from my own observation, it seems that it is incumbent on girls to ensure that their fathers and brothers are never put into positions where they must publicly defend the family reputation. That is, through discretion and unimpeachable public comportment girls must make their family's avoidance socially possible and credible to observers. This trust, arrangement, or negotiation lies at the heart of how local girls navigate the exigencies of the family reputation.

In contrast, most of the American-Palestinian girls I interviewed understood the maintenance of "reputation" to be solely dependent on one's own behaviour, both public and private, rather than something that is negotiated with family and the larger community. There was little sophistication in their understandings of social negotiation and they held naive expectations about the relationship between context, behaviour, and character, rejecting any possibility of variation or contradiction. Indeed, when girls were aware that local girls' public comportment sharply contrasted with their private actions they tended to brand them as hypocritical and dishonest. In other words, American-Palestinian girls had mostly taken up the discourse on

reputation as an absolute rather than negotiating the terms of reputation as local Palestinian girls do through practices of discretion and reliance on the already good standing of their families.[41] For instance, Sara used this metaphor: "You totally have to think of yourself as a glass. If you break, there's no way you can put it together again." As such, honour or reputation is a zero-sum game in their estimation, rather than something that is negotiated between family members and between family members and their community. According to the American-Palestinian girls I spoke to, one wrong move can permanently compromise a girl and her family. Lana explained,

> It's so important for a girl to have a good reputation. If you do one little thing [e.g. being with a boy, wearing too revealing or tight clothes] that's enough to ruin it....And it's also important for the girl's family....When I think of "reputation" I automatically think of [the issue of] girls and guys.

Nadia's interpretation was as follows:

> Reputation is for yourself and your family....If you're bad then that makes your family look bad....A guy will just be a guy here. There's a lot more pressure on girls here....you can't do certain things [e.g. talking or going out with guys]....I don't understand why guys and girls go out here because all it does is bring trouble....in my *balad* if they found out a girl was with a guy then it would be really, really bad....you'd be shut away in your house, people wouldn't look you in the eye....you'd lose all respect....her father's name would be ruined....a guy too, they would get it [from the girl's family] and his family would lose respect too, but not as much....I've learned as I've went along. I've seen girls at the school get into trouble. Girls in my *balad* get into trouble. For what?....Besides, I would never do that [things that could potentially ruin her reputation] to my parents. I would never do that to myself.

The girls held contradictory notions of the maintenance of honour in terms of how much control they had over their reputations. For instance, on the one hand, it was a common sentiment amongst the girls I spoke to that if they did nothing "wrong" then they would not get into trouble. In this respect what seemed to be important were the girls' own internally-held intentions and motivations rather than the external appearance of their actions. For instance, Nadia told me, "The way I feel, if you believe in what you're doing and you're not doing anything wrong then there's nothing to talk about.....if you're a decent person nothing's going to happen." Cindy espoused a similar interpretation: "I believe that if a girl has respect for herself and knows what she wants she can do whatever she wants without asking." She added, "Of course, you have to ask." Cindy added this ironically, showing up in high contrast the contradiction between the discourse that a pure heart is all that matters, or that in sexual-social comportment one is only answerable to Allah, with the everyday lived experience and understanding that unmarried girls are also subject to the judgement of their families and communities.

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[41] This, however, is not true of all of the girls. The case of Laila, and to a lesser degree that of Dalal, both of which will be explored in more detail in chapter five, are two example of girls who exploited the possibilities of reputation as a relational entity. Amal, as we see later in this section, also appreciated the relational nature of reputation.

There is a certain individualism to these notions of reputation (contradicted by Cindy's proviso that one "has to ask" for permission), and a faith that good prevails in the maintenance of the "honour code". On the other hand, most of them also spoke of the pernicious nature of gossip in their West Bank villages, and how it ruins reputations.

Cindy reflected:

> I've become more attached to my religion [since moving to Palestine]. I didn't used to care what people said, but now I do. People talk here....Whenever I hear gossip I pretend I don't hear it. Because that's the main thing that causes problems in this country. I stay away from it and from people who gossip.

Note here Cindy's use of the term "religion" and its counter-point relation to gossip. At first glance, Cindy's statement appears to be a *non sequitur* until "religion" is replaced with "reputation". Nadia told me, "Gossiping here is hard to get used to....you have to be careful [because people misinterpret things you do and say]." Khadija said that she would like it better in Palestine if it weren't for the gossip: "It would be ok here if it weren't for the people and how they talk." She noted that girls are killed for the sake of family honour in Palestine, and sometimes wrongly, based on incorrect information or empty gossip. Although it had not happened in her family before, Khadija believed that her family would commit an honour killing if called for. Following this, Ally said, "To talk bad about a girl is the worst thing that can happen to you here." The key issue is sexual comportment, and "especially for an Arabic girl, the most important thing is her virginity." Ally concluded,

> It's more dangerous [in Palestine]. That's why I want to go back [to the US]. If a rumour is heard here it'll get around and back to your family. And for respect for the family they'll have to kill you.

Finally, during my discussions with Linda she said, "There are always expectations that you'll hold the family name [reputation]....If you bring it down it's never forgotten." She then proceeded to recount a story of a Palestinian girl in Florida who had a black boyfriend ("maybe they even did 'it'").[42] This girl also held a part-time job that kept her working each night until 1:00 a.m. The story went that she was afraid for her life, suspecting that her family was going to kill her. She even went to the police about it, and they bugged her house when the parents were out. This girl sneaked out of the house to go the high school prom with her boyfriend. Her parents tracked her down there. She tried to run away, but they brought her to the house where her mother held her down and her father cut her throat.

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[42] Note the "black boyfriend". Race and sexuality emerged in several of the girls' accounts, as we also saw in the previous chapter with Dalal's narrative.

A teacher at a high school for returnees told me that her female students were frequently told horrific honour killing stories by their parents. Although this teacher did not believe that the majority of the parents she knew would commit such a crime, she noted that often their daughters did not share this conviction. She believed that these parents told their daughters these stories as a deterrent.[43]

One girl's experience captures the dynamics of actions and appearances, and the importance of family name and the leverage it provides when it comes to matters of reputation. Amal moved from her maternal aunt's to live on her own in Ramallah. In order to do so she had to resolve problems with her father over this issue. She and her father finally agreed that the apartment would be in his name, and officially his, with the story that occasionally he sleeps there when not in the village (which he does):

> My father [had a problem with me living on my own] because it was socially unacceptable here, people would talk....but eventually I convinced him that if I wanted to live here I needed my own place and I couldn't wait until I got married....I needed time where I could just look at four walls and nothing else [which she didn't have the privacy to do at her aunt's]....I told him that I would be very, very careful....and we're lucky--our neighbours don't get too involved.

Amal noted that the apartment was in a Christian neighbourhood, which she believed made it easier to maintain privacy and avoid gossip. Living alone was just one factor that could have potentially compromised Amal's reputation. In fact, very few single Palestinian women live away from their parents or other family members. Amal was also active in social, political, and cultural activities in Ramallah, something very few young, unmarried women do:

> The fact that I'm my aunt's niece and my father's daughter helps [give her the freedom to pursue her social and political activities without censure]....I guess it really surprises me that I could have a bad reputation because of the things I do....things like having meetings late at night, having friends over, helping out with [cultural-political activities], hanging out at [local restaurants and bars], walking casually on the street with friends....all these things could have ruined my reputation, but they haven't.

Nonetheless, Amal did feel that she must proceed with caution:

> Being female here will always make you feel more worried, more scared [for your reputation]....In [the US] you worry for your safety, but here you worry about everything else.

This statement came on the heels of a particularly ugly situation in which Amal found herself. One night, about a month before this conversation, at around midnight, she was sitting in a restaurant

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[43] Manasra (1993) also discusses this tactic as used in the upbringing of Palestinian-born and raised girls.

alone with five other men--all of them close friends including the owner and men who worked there--when two police came and arrested them all and brought them down to the police station. At the station it finally dawned on Amal that she was being arrested for prostitution. The officer in charge wanted to take her to a doctor that night for an examination to determine whether she had engaged in sexual intercourse. They wanted to contact her father, at which point she began yelling at them, "All right. My father is [a well-known Palestinian official] and I want you to call him right now and explain to him what you are doing." At this, when they discovered whom her father was, Amal reported, they backed off and let her go. The police admitted they were wrong in the end, but told her that she "had put herself in a bad situation."

The experience profoundly disturbed her. She said that it changed the way she moves in Ramallah and how she thinks about her movements. Previous to this Amal had thought that if she just lived "straight" then all would be well. She had also relied on her family's reputation and support as "protection", which in fact they did provide in the final instance.

Despite the strictures of "reputation" in the West Bank, some of the girls, as discussed above, reported being given more freedom in Palestine than they enjoyed in the US. Probably an equal proportion felt more constrained.

Dalal linked access to financial resources with freedom. She and her sister both received a NIS5 (US$1.40)/day allowance which had to cover all of their expenses (transportation, school lunches, personal toiletries, etc.). According to Dalal, her mother didn't like them to save up money and forced them to spend any they might have saved up. Dalal said of her mother, "My mom always says, 'I don't want my daughters to have any money because I don't want them to be like other people [going out to Ramallah or Jerusalem].'"

Nadia reported that she had less freedom in the West Bank than in the US, and even less than many other girls, both American-Palestinian and local: "The girls [both local and American-Palestinian] that I know here have a lot more freedom here than I do." This was largely to do with her paternal grandfather, who was "old-fashioned" on the issue of girls and freedom, but also, her mother "gets nervous" about her going to Ramallah because "there's sometimes wrong people [there]." Even so, "There's basically just nothing to do here and even if you want to do something it's just so complicated to do anything....you go to ask this person, you go to ask that person [for permission]." On the other hand, Nadia claimed, "My *balad* is more relaxed than a lot of villages here because a lot of them went to America."

Other girls also tried to take a balanced approach to measuring their relative freedom in Palestine compared to in the US. For instance, Aisha answered my questions this way:

> Well as I already told you, in America I could never go anywhere without an adult or family member. Here, my parents allow me to go to friends' houses, and to some restaurants. I dress the same way both in America and here. I only wore shorts to the beach in America, and never wore a sleeveless shirt, or a bathing suit, and I never wanted to wear them. So I have more freedom here. I can't sing on the streets of Ramallah, nor chase my brothers around, but I could over there because no one cared.

Dina struggled with this question, linking it to identity differences between Palestinian-born and raised girls and American-Palestinians:

> Compared to other girls, I get more freedom to go out, but then I think about it, and there are other people I know that have the same freedoms. My cousin who was born in America and raised on-and-off here and there, is a couple of years older and has just as much freedom as I do and maybe more. In fact, she lives in the dorms at Hebrew U. My other cousin is 27 (unmarried), has never even visited America, works and has freedom to do whatever.
>
> Different people have different beliefs. Most of my friends are religious and would never go out [with boys], but that doesn't mean that every Arab[44] or Arab-American girl is like that. I know Arabs that are very religious or just don't believe in dating. But I know a lot more that just don't care. On the Arab-American side of it, I know girls who don't mind dating and see it as normal (as long as they don't get caught), but there are a lot of girls that just wouldn't do it.

Dina attempts to find consistent strands of practice and belief that epitomise "Arab" and "Arab-American" girls' identities, and fails in the attempt. Yet, intuitively she relates practice with identity. The mistake lies in the attempt to totalise local Palestinian and American-Palestinian identities and experiences. Where Dina may have been able to locate differences between herself and local Palestinian girls are in the differing meanings they attach to the nature of restrictions, how the nature, meaning, and practice of restrictions are shaped by class, context, and locale, and in the ways that they are deployed as practices to maintain "honour" or "reputation".

## Gender, identity, and "return"

This chapter has illustrated how notions of kinship and honour shape the daily experience of unmarried Palestinian-American girls in the US and in the West Bank. The "protection" of Palestinian-American daughters in the US is vital to Palestinian family "honour" and identity. While the performance of domestic duties such as housework and family nurturance are important aspects of the girls' identities (and relationally, their mothers', fathers' and siblings' identities), the most common practice of being a Palestinian-American girl in the US is found in a series of restrictions on activities concerning the regulation, and even suppression, of sexuality. Family "honour" is deposited in girls' bodies, and the masculinity of fathers and brothers, the positive

evaluation of mothers[45] and fathers' parenting, and the quality of being "Palestinian" lie in the mastery and ability to control daughters'/sisters' sexuality. "Reputation" in this context becomes an all-important measure and standard of value of the girl and each of her family members.

The girls I spoke to share these experiences with daughters of other diasporic parents, one of whom spoke to Das Gupta (1997, 579) of "the extreme insulation of her home as a result of her mother's acute anxieties about the 'corrupting' influences of American society." As in my encounters, this researcher of Indian-American women's experiences in the US found generational and gendered conflicts over ethnic identity and restrictions on daughters (Das Gupta 1997, 582-4). Another scholar of the Indian experience in the US alludes to the enmeshed nature of a father's relationships with his children in a vein similar to those found in the families of the girls I interviewed:

> The burden of the past weighs heavily on this man's representation of his own self and that of his offspring. For, if his children *were* to "go astray", it would almost be a betrayal not only of his decision [to migrate to the US], but also of his identity--as male, father and Indian (Ganguly 1992, 36).

Parents play their identities out as men and women, and also as Palestinians, through their children, especially their daughters. Indeed, the common practice of diasporic American Palestinian visits to the West Bank during the summer "wedding season" can be interpreted as emblematic of this, where parents hope to secure marriages for their Palestinian-American daughters to sons of Palestine:

> Marriage arrangements based on a need to preserve kinship bonds persist in some sectors of society, although their original role as a way to preserve property or power arrangements has disappeared. Instead, kinship-based marriage arrangements now exist as a way to preserve the continued identity of dispersed communities (Heiberg, Øvensen 1993, 286).

Marrying their daughters to family or same-village kin can be seen as an attempt to claim and maintain through their female progeny their own "Palestinianness". Marriage of daughters in their late teens and early twenties to Palestinians also circumvents any possibility of their marriage to "Americans"--non-Arab and non-Muslim. The very nature of the "return" of adolescent daughters in an attempt to inculcate them with "Palestinianness" can be read not only as the parents' bid to make room in Palestine for their children, but also to maintain, preserve, and even protect their own claim to Palestine and Palestinian identity. This follows from the motivation discussed by Das Gupta's Indian-American informants' parents. One woman

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[44] As was indicated in the previous chapter, all of the girls I interviewed referred to native-born and raised Palestinians as "Arabs".

[45] See Kandiyoti's (1988) explication of the "patriarchal bargain" to understand mothers' investment in the "honour" code.

> wondered about her father's "narrow outlook", which she felt was an anomaly, considering his westernization and the increasing "liberalization" of the Indian middle-class ethos that she noticed during her trips to India. For the first generation, however, this liberalization adds to their sense of authenticity. Developments in India serve as a measure of their success in being more Indian than Indians in India....tradition becomes an embattled category (Das Gupta 1997, 580).

In other words, the more that Indians in India or Palestinians in Palestine stray from ideal notions of expression of their identities, frequently rooted in the past and in "tradition", the more room it leaves diasporic Indians and Palestinians who attempt to maintain these "traditional" practices to claim authenticity.

The girls I spoke to shared the experience of restriction as regulation of their sexuality in both the US and in Palestine, but the content of those restrictions varied from girl to girl. They were all angry about the double standard they were subject to in the US and in the West Bank, and about the standards and expectations imposed on them in Palestine because of their "Americanness". However, only Amal was critical of the "museumization of practices", that code of comportment and ideology constructed from ideas about the Palestinian past and place (Das Gupta 1997, 580) which Palestinian parents subject their daughters to in the US and in the West Bank.

Finally, almost all of them dealt with reputation, or "honour" as an absolute zero-sum standard of comportment rather than something that can be negotiated. Many of the girls held contradictory notions of the maintenance of "reputation". They upheld the notion of reputation as dependent on the good will and intent of each girl while at the same time feared the vagaries of gossip and its impact on their reputations. It is through this imperative to give the impression of blameless living, which is conflated with the appearance of full uptake of Palestinian and/or Muslim identities, that many girls play out their identities strategically. I will return to this theme in chapter five.

Yet, other aspects of identity, only hinted at in this chapter but more fully developed in the one previous, such as racial and class positioning, the construction and deployment of "American", "Palestinian", "Arab", and "Muslim" identities in the US and Palestine, and the articulation of gender with each of these, also play a significant role. Family relations of course underpin, intersect, even contradict, or otherwise frequently define the terrain of these other features of identity.

So far, in much of what I have written about Palestinian-American girls I have defined them as actors situated in particular histories of migration, enmeshed family relations defined by considerations of "honour", and class, ethnic, national, racial, religious, and locale-defined strata

and relations. I have yet to paint a picture of how migration background, family history and relations, and ethnic/religious/national identities work together with personal fantasies/versions of the self to create attractive strategic options for the "playing out", deployment, or practice of identities. It is this analysis, using specific case histories from interviews, which forms the basis of my next chapter.

# Chapter Five

## Practices of Identity and Fantasies of Self: Power and Agency, Subordination and Resistance

> Despite such experiences [sexual harassment on the street], early in my teens I claimed walking as a mark of my individuality. Determined to assert my difference since I could not eradicate it, I walked everywhere, consciously lengthening my stride and walking with a freedom of motion I longed to extend to the rest of my life. Walking offered a means both of setting myself off from and of confronting the Arab culture that I felt to overwhelm me. I wanted to insist that I was "other" than these people whose language I barely spoke, even though they were my relatives; that I was American...(Majaj 1994, 77).

> ...important tensions may arise when places that have been imagined at a distance must become lived spaces (Gupta, Ferguson 1992, 11)--*an incredible understatement.*

When I first became acquainted with American-Palestinian returnee girls I anticipated that they would display much rebellious behaviour. I had in mind my high school friend Carla, the daughter of Italian emigrants to Canada, who routinely broke her parents' prohibitions on dating, drinking, and mixed-sex socializing. I had forgotten, however, Nira and Mary, two other school friends, the daughters of Indian and Egyptian parents, as well as another friends' neighbour who was the daughter of Yugoslav parents. These girls, while friendly with others at school, never socialised with us, and only Mary was active on school sports teams, which also contributed to her considerable popularity. I did not then understand the social constraints that these girls might be under, but often wondered why they did not go to the school dances, and go out with us at night and on weekends to parties, clubs, and bars. I didn't understand why they seemed to limit their high school lives to homework, classes, and in Mary's case, sports. I was not attentive then, either, to the more subtle ways in which they may have been subverting or negotiating their parents' social expectations of and limitations imposed on them.

In this chapter I explore the ways in which the American-Palestinian girls I spoke to deployed strategies available to them in order to act out their fantasised selves. I use the term "fantasy" following Henrietta Moore (1994a, 66; also see Butler 1990a, 1990b), who uses it to speak about

> ideas about the kind of person one would like to be and the sort of person one would like to be seen to be by others....Such fantasies of identity are linked to fantasies of power and agency in the world....[the term fantasy] emphasizes the often affective and subconscious nature of investment in various subject positions, and in the social strategies necessary to maintain that investment.

Such fantasies rest and are built on how actors are inserted in varying discourses of gender, race, and ethnicity, as well as how they are engaged in family and other social relationships. Judith Butler (1990b, 334) reminds us that "fantasies condition and construct the specificity of the gendered subject with the enormously important qualification that these fantasies are themselves disciplinary productions of grounding cultural sanctions and taboos." Post-structuralist theorising on the construction of the subject (Henriques et al. 1984; Butler 1990a; Mahoney, Yngvesson 1992; Moore 1994a) contends that "discourses and discursive practices provide various subject positions, and that individuals take up a variety of subject positions within different discourses" (Moore 1994a, 55; also see Meigs 1990). These discourses and discursive practices are multiple, varying, and even contradictory, but the "subjective experience of identity", embodiment, and "historical continuity of the subject where past subject positions tend to overdetermine present subject positions" hold subjectivities together and are constitutive of agency (Moore 1994a, 55).

Some theorists of identity borrow Pierre Bourdieu's (1977) notion of "habitus" to explain the acquisition of migrant or ethnic identities (Bentley 1987; Bottomley 1991). While I believe that "habitus" has some explanatory power when trying to understand identities forged in the families of Palestinian-Americans in the US, I agree with Arjun Appadurai's (1990) observation that for migrant families ethnic identities are no longer a matter of "habitus" in so far as they are taken up by choice or degrees of coercion. This is particularly true when examining identity deployments or performances that take place outside of the family realm. Besides, "habitus"-based notions of ethnicity and identity seem to be more appropriate when discussing the identity constructs of individuals living in communities that are relatively homogeneous and stable over time, as was the Algerian Kabyle village in which Bourdieu did his fieldwork. The heterogeneous situations in which Palestinian-American girls have lived their lives in the US and in the West Bank fragments and multiplies the identity options made available to them, thus problematising the notion of "habitus" and leaves open the question of how the mechanics of identity acquisition function in contexts riddled with contradictory discourses and practices. Post-structuralist notions of performance and discourse as constitutive practices of identity[1] allow for the multiple and contradictory deployment of identities by singular persons, and at the same time are consistent with the actual micro-dynamics of embodied identity acquisition that Bourdieu (1977) outlines.

Gender, then, (as is ethnicity), according to Teresa de Lauretis (1987, 3) "is (a) representation". In her essay, "The Technology of Gender", de Lauretis (1987) borrows from Michel Foucault's phrase "technology of sex" to describe how gender is a representation, and is representative of,

belongingness or insertion in social relations between different classes or categories of individuals. These representations in the form of acts, gestures, words, and desire, produce the effect of internalisation, but, as Butler (1990b, 336) says, "produce this on the surface of the body". Gender, and other identities, is "tenuously constituted in time--an identity instituted through a *stylized repetition of acts*" (Butler 1988, 519, author's emphasis). De Lauretis (1987, 12) borrows Louis Althusser's term "interpellation" to describe the same process: "a social representation is accepted and absorbed by an individual as her (or his) own representation, and so becomes, for that individual, real".

The possibilities for social change, transformation, lie in the "arbitrary relation" between representations, acts, or performances that create space for breaking repetition or to act representations subversively (Butler 1988, 520; also see Basch, Schiller and Blanc 1994, 46). As Moore (1994a) reminds us, individuals act out a variety of, sometimes competing, subject positions, making the "post-structuralist subject" the site of differences. In his analysis of "ethnic autobiographies" written by "hyphenated Americans", Michael Fischer (1986, 202) claims that they "illustrate intertextuality, inter-reference, and the interlinguistic modalities of post-modernist knowledge." Alternatively, Moore (1994b) highlights the difficulties that women and girls face when constructing feminine identities. She concludes that women "have a complex and shifting relation to the category 'woman'....the attributes associated with the category 'woman' are often predominantly negative, making identification not only risky, but often potentially pathologizing" (Moore 1994b, 145). This can result in the kinds of self-destructive practices of identity and resistance, such as suicide, prostitution, substance abuse, and mental and physical illness as analyzed by Richard Cloward and Frances Piven (1979), and which Moore (1994b) links to the incidence of gendered violence and others to the incidence of eating disorders (Orbach 1986; Brumberg 1988).

Whether "hyphenated" or female, slippage is an element of both types of identities. Like Butler (1988), Fischer (1986, 207) believes that changes in or new forms of ethnic identities occur "through intended repetitions that in fact work through misappropriation or distortion." Parodic representations, and Butler (1990a, 1990b) uses drag to illustrate this, can disrupt the meaning of the surface presentation because of the audience's *a priori* assumptions about the performer's gendered, or other marked, essence. In other words, the actor is not what s/he seems: "If the anatomy of the performer is already distinct from the gender of the performer, and both of those distinct from the gender of the performance, then the performance suggests a dissonance not only between sex and performance but between sex and gender, and gender and performance....In

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[1] For a review of literature on "performance theory" and anthropology see Morris (1995), and for an excellent explanation of identity as discursively constituted see Henriques et al. (1984).

imitating gender, drag implicitly reveals the imitative structure of gender itself--as well as its contingency" (Butler 1990a, 338).

Choice of positioning in certain sets of discourses and practices rather than in others is explained by Wendy Holloway (1984) with the notion of "investment". She avoids the term "choice" because it "does not convey the complexity of causes for action" that are rooted in "the histories of individuals [that reveal]...recursive positioning in certain positions of discourse" (Holloway 1984, 238). "Investment" means that there is some amount of satisfaction, pay-off, or reward in the taking up of one subject position over another. However, this satisfaction or reward can be in contradiction with other feelings or subject positions that the actor takes up, implying that investment is not necessarily rational or conscious. Moore (1994a, 53) points out that there can be Freudian slips of embodied practice just as there are in speech.

The girls I spoke to juggled various identities that frequently contradicted each other. For instance, many of them valued the notion of women's equal rights, something they, and sometimes their families and their immediate Palestinian communities, associated with the US and with being "American". At the same time they highly valued their positions as "protected" daughters in their families. Lack of economic and social power and of access to resources played no small part in this investment. But also, as Joan Meyer (1991, 21) makes clear, "loving relationships are vehicles of both love and power at the same time". As a result, resistance becomes a more complicated matter. In speaking about veiled Egyptian women's modes of protest Arlene MacLeod (1991, 146) points out that women cannot, and generally do not desire to, simply work towards a reversal of power relationships, as for example, peasants or workers might in a revolt against the landowner or capitalist. Finally, R.W. Connell (1987, 113), using Freud's notion of "cathexis", analyses how "the erotic reciprocity in hegemonic heterosexuality [organised in male-female marriage] is based on unequal exchange", and how this unequal exchange also characterises arrangements of domestic labour and nurture in the marriage and family. Traditionally, social scientists have neglected analysis of how both love and power work together and may be at odds in relationships. However, in the study of gender, marriage, and family relationships this correlation cannot be avoided.

In the Middle Eastern case this interrelation between love and power is analyzed to some extent in some of the literature on "honour", reviewed in the previous chapter. However, some of the most interesting work in this regard has been done by Suad Joseph (1993a, 1993b, 1994a), based on her fieldwork in Camp Trad, a suburb of Beirut. Her residence there in the 1970s gave her the opportunity to intimately observe the relations of a variety of families across sectarian, ethnic, and national lines. From her observations she devised a model of "patriarchal connectivity" to

describe the meshing of love, power, and the construction of masculinity and femininity in the family.

Joseph (1993b, 466) found that "connectivity intertwined with patriarchy to produce...'patriarchal connectivity'--relationally oriented feminine and masculine selves organized for gendered and aged hierarchy". Further, Joseph defines "connectivity" to mean that

> persons expected intimate others to read each other's minds, answer for each other, anticipate each other's needs, shape their likes and dislikes in accordance with each other's. They saw intimate others as extensions of each other (1993b, 467).

Connectivity is usually, but not always, reciprocal and is engaged in between men and women, seniors and juniors. Relations defined by connectivity can be "loving or hostile, compatible or competitive, fragile or firm, or simultaneously each of the above" (Joseph 1993b, 467). They are also changeable over each other's lifecycle so that "[o]lder sisters, for example, saw younger brothers as extensions of themselves and then came to see themselves as extensions of their younger brothers when the boys came of age" (Joseph 1993b, 467); "[p]atriarchal connectivity entitled males and elders to see others as extensions of themselves and socialized females and juniors to see themselves as extensions of others" (Joseph 1993b, 469). Connectivity intertwined with patriarchy, then, is a powerful mode of relationality that "produce[s] persons willing and capable of entering into gendered and aged hierarchical relations and prioritizing familial needs and desires" (Joseph 1993b,469) and that privilege male and senior needs, desires, and feelings. Patriarchal connectivity produces family members, both male and female, with fluid identity boundaries that maintain and support the valorisation of the family and kin relations, and gendered and aged hierarchies, all situated within discourses of "honour".

Given the weight of responsibility to ensure the upbringing of good Palestinian daughters in the US, it is easy to understand how "connective patriarchy" results in the imposition of a series of restrictions and stringent behavioural expectations on unmarried girls by their parents and siblings. However, one of the girls I spoke to also painted connectivity (albeit without the patriarchy) as it is enacted in the larger West Bank social context in a positive and nurturing light:

> When I come here I'm not "Amal" coming from the US. I'm Mahmoud's granddaughter, I'm Rana's niece....my name is enough--it gets on your nerves too--some people will only know me as so-and-so's granddaughter and so-and-so's niece....It was a constant struggle just to survive [in the US]....you run to here, you run to there....here, everything ends by six or seven....I like the fact that everyone knows everyone else....I like the fact that this person knows my grandmother and loves her and so will invite me for a cup of tea...it makes me feel at home. It makes me feel safe.

Another Palestinian-American recounts her family feeling as a child and young woman in terms similar to those outlined by Joseph:

> My childhood was permeated by the lesson, incessantly reinforced, that family is not just vital to self, but is so inherent that family and self are in a sense one and the same....the mesh of familial expectations stressed in Arab culture provided a sense of security not readily apparent in my experience of American relationships, with their emphasis on individualism. However restrictively articulated, the stable definitions of self available in my childhood context held a certain appeal for me, caught as I was in a confusion of cultures....I was aware only that being Arab, even in part, mandated a profound rejection of any self-definition that contradicted the claims of familial bonds (Majaj 1994, 72).

Family relations characterized by patriarchal connectivity go some distance to explain why I saw so little overt rebellion amongst the girls I interviewed. For instance, Lisa Majaj (1994, 72-3) answers this question by framing the issue in terms of the depths of her identity:

> ...some [American] friends seemed unable to understand why I would not rebel simply and cleanly....But to do so would have meant the abrogation not just of emotional connections, but of my very identity....without the security of being able to first lay full claim to the identity one rejects, rebellion becomes precarious and difficult.

Indeed, just how deep family connections run and how explicit the divide is between those who are kin and those who are not was demonstrated for me when a close friend, an extremely non-"traditional" Palestinian, referred to non-family members as "foreigners". When I asked him to clarify what he meant (at first I thought he was referring to non-Palestinians), he almost seemed surprised and embarrassed at what he had said. The situation becomes slightly more complex when access to social and economic resources and the integrity of the Palestinian-American family within the American context are factored into the equation. Louise Cainkar (1988, 230) found in her interviews with Palestinian-American women in Chicago that compliance with family expectations is high "because to defy them means to lose the support structure it [the family] provides." The US is perceived as a hostile and potentially dangerous place to be, as I discussed in chapters three and four, and women are regarded as most vulnerable to physical and sexual attack. Cainkar (1988, 229-30; 1996) found that her interviewees attributed the high levels of violence in American society to what they perceived to be equally high levels of personal freedom in the US. They believed that American women, while they had significantly more freedom than Palestinian women, were also less respected by men and American society, they were not well treated by their husbands, and they had no material security. Americans, they said, care only for themselves, leading to a lack of respect between husband and wife, between parents and children, and that the high levels of freedom provide no "glue" to hold society and families together. Palestinians, and Palestinian families, care for each other. I speculate then, that to abrogate the family "glue", to take advantage of American-style freedom by claiming individual rights that contradict family interests as defined by elders and men and situated within discourses of honour, would not only lose a daughter the material security of her Palestinian family, but would also thrust the family into the realm of being "American" and "not

Palestinian". There would seem to be little incentive to invest in the version of American family life that Cainkar's respondents painted.

Thus, many of the girls I spoke to closely resembled this description of Indian-American women living in the US:

> They had certainly not lost their identification with their "Indian" roots. Nor did that knowledge coexist comfortably with what they understood to be "American" about them. These two parts of their identity were in constant strife, eluding their designation as Indian Americans. The discreetness of the strung-together identities in a happy coming together of the mainstream and margin failed to capture the complexity of their shifting identities riddled as they were with relations of power (Das Gupta 1997, 575).

The girls I discuss in this chapter were inserted within multiple and sometimes conflicting discourses on what it is to be a young woman, an unmarried girl, Palestinian, and American. Investment in one position over another was strictly contextual, and even fleetingly of the moment. In the following section I will focus on how various girls struggled with these contradictory positionalities and played them out as modes of resistance to disempowering relations and discourses in which they were also inserted.

**Negotiating power, resisting subordination, and the contradictions of overlapping identities**

In this section I present a collection of case studies or fragments of girls' lives and actions that I think highlight some of the theoretical considerations I have elaborated upon in this chapter and the conflicts facing most unmarried American-Palestinian returnee girls. It is in their sometimes painful struggles that we can "read" American-Palestinian girls' situatedness at the intersections of gender and nationality, and how they are able to negotiate and "play out" these various and contradictory identities. Borrowing from Moore (1994a, 50), Azam Torab (1996, 238) reminds us that "[r]esistance and complicity are not only types of agency but are also forms or aspects of subjectivity". The value of all of the stories in this chapter lie in what they can tell us about the politics of identity, of family relations, and migrations and transnational existence. I want to use these stories as "diagnostic[s] of power" (Abu-Lughod 1990c, 42). Justifications for the use of individual case histories to reveal social systems of power can be found in Lila Abu-Lughod (1990c), Judith Okely (1991), and Moore (1994a) who all demonstrate how examination of the actions and lives of individuals reveal sites of power, dominance, and resistance.

What became clear to me during the course of my interactions with American-Palestinian girls was that they associated being "American" with a variety of attributes that promised positive possibilities for them as girls and young women. While mainstream and subcultural American

discourses on gender are permeated with sexist and even misogynist sentiments and ideas about what it is to be men and women, there are also competing versions within these same broad categories that offer more enabling, or perhaps powerful, visions. For instance, heavy metal music "often stages fantasies of masculine virtuosity and control", but at the same time "one of the more successful representations of women in metal is the femme fatale" (Walser 1993, 108, 118):

> Visual images, narrative, and the music combine...to represent women as threats to male control and even male survival. The mysteriousness of women confirms them as a dangerous Other, and their allure is an index of the threat. Female fans, who now make up half of the audience for heavy metal....are invited to identify with the powerful position that is thus constructed for them. It is a familiar one, since women are encouraged by a variety of cultural means to think of appearance as their natural route to empowerment (Walser 1993, 119).

Indeed, one need only read Fatna Sabbah's (1984) treatise on the construction of women's sexuality in Islamic discourses to gain impressions similar to those derived from heavy metal, perhaps offering a hint as to why some of the girls I spoke to found resonance in being a headbanger with their Palestinian and Muslim identities. In this respect I am referring to the construction of women's value as residing in their sexual appeal and appearance. Both heavy metal and Islam locate women's power in their sexuality and its hold on men (also see Mernissi 1987). Additionally, heavy metal representations are frequently androgynous, with male rock stars wearing makeup, sporting long, flowing hair, and even jewellery and sexy clothing (seen in "glam metal"). Robert Walser (1993, 131) argues that

> [h]eavy metal androgyny presents, from the point of view of women, a fusion of the signs specific to current notions of femininity with musically and theatrically produced power and freedom that are conventionally male....As usual, women are offered male subject positions as a condition of their participation in empowerment, but the men with whom they are to identify have been transformed by their appropriations of women's signs....At the symbolic level, prestige--male presence, gesture, musical power--is conferred upon "female" signs.

Thus, the feminine and signs of feminine sexuality are valorised. "In some ways," Walser (1993, 131) suggests, "heavy metal reflects the impact of...the greatest achievement of feminist theory, the problematization of gender."

Like heavy metal music, black/African-American rap culture offers a view of women and gender relations that carries some resonance with the practices and discourses that Palestinian-American teenagers may have been taught by their parents as being typical of Palestinian and Muslim culture and identity:

> [Nation of Islam teachings] suggest that Black women should be 'respected and protected', confined to a domestic sphere and serve a subordinate role relative to their husbands. In contrast, a significant amount of the gender imagery in rap, especially the subgenre of gangsta rap, simultaneously celebrates and condemns the kind of Black

> woman who is presumably undeserving of either respect or protection, the bad girl, Jezebel, whore, bitch (Ransby, Matthews 1993, 64).

However, despite their infamy as misogynist and masculinist, rap lyrics offer other versions of gender and gender relations in the music of women rappers who "challenge the musical and ideological dominance of the male rappers" and whose songs "advocate positive relations among men and women, call for sisterhood and project...[and offer an] 'Afrocentric feminist epistemology'" (Lusane 1993, 53; also see Boyd 1994, 291, 299-302). Queen Latifah, a prominent woman rapper, "challenges white male patriarchal power" (Ransby, Matthews 1993, 65), and Shante "constructs herself as 'sexy', 'intelligent' and 'devastating': an amalgam of traits usually represented as mutually exclusive in a woman" (Irving 1993, 116).

Additionally, the mainstream American feminist movement is prominently reported in the US media, and over the past three decades has shaped public debates having to do with gender relations, the provision of equal rights legislation, and women's access to material, social, and political resources. It is impossible to escape exposure to and the influence of this discursive climate if resident in the US, and many of the girls' own narratives about what they appreciated about being American and living in the US reflected their identification with these issues.

While open-mindedness, access to education and information, the validity of women's equality, independence, and access to resources were all associated with being "American" by the girls I spoke with, almost all had little, if any, exposure to or knowledge of the ideas and activities of the Palestinian feminist and women's community(ies), and many seemed to reduce Palestinians and "Palestinanness" and "Arabness" to the worst stereotypes of oriental chauvinism. Of course, these associations were in part cultivated by their parents' conservative and in many ways out-moded notions of what were acceptable standards of comportment and types of aspirations for unmarried Palestinian girls. This inevitably led to situations where the girls' aspirations for and fantasies of themselves came into conflict with pressures to be "Palestinian" in ways similar to Monisha Das Gupta's (1997, 584-5) Indian-American interviewees:

> The women resisted the suffocating aspects of their parents' cultural expectations and tried gaining some control over their lives--their education, their career plans, and marriage. They related bitter confrontations with their parents, who had instituted themselves in authorial positions about the "right" culture. They were under constant pressure to weigh and evaluate, accept or reject the claims that the two cultures--"Indian" and "American"--laid on them. As a generation of Indians who had spent most of their formative years in a country different from that of their parents, they found themselves constantly negotiating their allegiance to their parents' natal culture and the culture of their adopted home.

Nancy provided a glimpse of the contradictions between the varying fantasies and investments she held, and which she shared in common with many of the other girls. Nancy was a young

adult by western standards: she had completed a professional degree in the US, had some professional experience, and was capable of supporting herself independently if she chose to do so. Nancy and her family lived in a white upper-middle class community in the US, but her parents took the decision to move themselves and their unmarried daughters and young son to the West Bank in 1992, leaving the care of the family store in her older married brother's hands. Nancy was in the midst of completing her degree when her parents moved, and so she began living with her brother who, along with being responsible for the family business, was also responsible for the care of Nancy. Yet Nancy emphasized to me during the course of our interviews that she had been given a choice to move to the West Bank. She regarded herself as an advocate of women's rights, and as a young professional and capable woman. Indeed, she was all of these. But a contradiction emerged when I explored more closely with her the contents of this "choice". She had repeated to me several times that instead of moving to the West Bank at Christmas, she could have remained in her practicum job until the following summer. When I pressed her and asked her if she had a choice about whether to move to the West Bank at all, she laughed and replied that if she suggested to her father that she remain in the US permanently he would have said to her, "Fine. You get a husband and you can do whatever you want. Let him deal with you." It became clear to me then that Nancy's original rendition of her "choice" reconciled the feminist version of herself with the version of herself as the good daughter. In fact, Nancy's choice to move to the West Bank earlier than she was required to supported her version of events that centred around her having a "choice" to move to Palestine. By adopting this tactic Nancy could avoid open internal contradiction between herself as a liberated American woman and as a dutiful Palestinian daughter.

Alia's negotiation of her independent womanhood took on more overt forms. While living in the US, Alia took up a number of sports activities at her high school. Indeed, she was a natural athlete, and seemed to thrive on physical challenge and the thrill of exertion. When she was in grade 9 she saw a television show on kickboxing that featured a US woman champion. Alia was immediately attracted to kickboxing and to the woman champion, whose words "Getting hit hurts: don't get hit" and muscular physique held a deep appeal for her. However, when she asked permission from her father to train as a kickboxer, he refused, saying, "No, you'll get hurt." In fact, her father's attitude towards her aspiration to kickbox marked his disposition toward all of her athletic endeavours. Alia complained that he only attended one of her track meets in the US, and then only under pressure from one of her friends who convinced to him to attend on her behalf. His failure to encourage her athleticism was a great disappointment to her as well as a source of hurt in their relationship. She felt that it was emblematic of what she believed was his general lack of support for her efforts to develop herself as a full, well-rounded, and accomplished person. When she learned mid-way through her grade eleven year that her parents intended to relocate the family to the West Bank, Alia was deeply unhappy about the decision. However, in the last few months

before she was to move she began to take up kickboxing. "It was like drinking water," Alia told me about the experience and sensation of learning how to kickbox. Her coach thought she was a "natural" at it and was disappointed that they didn't have longer to train. The time between her sessions at the gym felt almost too long to wait, she said, because it was during her training that she felt most alive. About her open defiance of her father's wishes, she said that her attitude at the time was flippant, cocky even, as she joked with her friends, "What's my dad going to do? Send me to Palestine?" Once in the West Bank, Alia began wearing the *mandil* and the *jilbab*. One day I said to her that the thought of her kickboxing seemed such a contradiction with what girls are "supposed" to be and her modest and pious presentation of herself in the West Bank. She agreed, answering that she herself frequently found it difficult to reconcile these contradictory aspects of her identity.

Taking up kickboxing a few months before her move to the West Bank seems like a last, defiant, "fling" at being a strong, independent "American" woman. Having lived much of her childhood in the West Bank, and already angry at the double standard of treatment she and her brothers were subject to both in the US and Palestine, Alia had some well-formed ideas about what life would be like for her once back in the West Bank. Her mutinous words justifying her kickboxing training indicate a sense of having nothing to lose, that the worst that could be done to her had already been decided. In the US she acted out a version of femininity through her regular athletic activities--very much a norm and acceptable in white, mainstream, middle class America--that was strong and capable. This athleticism was rejected by her father. However, kickboxing is an extreme expression of strength and athleticism, being combative and aggressive as well, and is hardly traditional feminine behaviour, for Americans as well as Palestinians. In fact, kickboxing could be read as a rejection of all that is "feminine", in terms of being passive and weak, in both cultures, much like women boxers seem to symbolise. This makes sense in light of her resentment of the double standard she was already living in her family in the US and the decision made by her parents to relocate. Having said this, women's bodybuilding and inclusion in non-traditional career sectors, most recently the struggle for women's inclusion in combat roles in the US military, signal a growing acceptance of American women involving themselves in activities that signify what has traditionally been viewed as "male" characteristics of strength and aggression, without necessarily losing their claim to femininity. There are currently many different ways of being a woman in the US, and several versions of how to be a strong and independent woman. Yet, once in the West Bank, her decision to begin wearing Islamic dress must not be read as a submissive stance, as I will discuss below. Rather, wearing the *mandil* and the *jilbab* is often a subversive act, and one designed to gain leverage in order to have freedom and power while projecting an image of piety, and even feminine submission. Alia's difficulty in reconciling her outward image in the West Bank with how she actually saw herself had less to do with what she believed Islamic dress made possible for her in terms of social freedom and space,

and more to do with the popular perception of covered girls and women. There is little or no tradition of women's athleticism in the West Bank, and as such it has no symbolic meaning other than signifying being unfeminine. Alia never saw herself as being unfeminine. On the contrary, she was a graceful, and indeed, highly sensuous girl. She did, however, see herself as a strong, talented, and capable young woman. Wearing Islamist dress in the West Bank could at least afford her the possibility of acting this version of herself out.

Other girls even more overtly challenged and played with the varying options available to them. Dalal grew up in a white middle-class neighbourhood in the US, but attended a racially mixed (but no Arabs) school. Her father moved her family from one region of the US to another, breaking business relations with his brothers with whom he had personal and business conflicts. Dalal's upbringing was closely supervised, and she was not allowed to date, go out late or with friends unsupervised. She reported always being conscious of her mother favouring her brothers over her sister and herself, and that she and her sister always felt closer to their father, despite his frequent absence from the home due to his business responsibilities.

Dalal's father was murdered in his store when she was in her senior year of high school. Her paternal uncles then began to communicate with Dalal's mother and "interfere" with the family. Dalal's father's murder coincided with her "rebellion", which consisted of taking a part-time job, buying her own car, and going out with male and female friends at night and unsupervised. When I asked her why her rebellion was timed with her father's death, she said, "Because I was tired of my [paternal] uncles stepping all over us. I believe there is more to life than from what we are just getting [*sic*], which is not really much." Dalal said that after her father's murder she changed from being quiet, patient, and easy-going to being more assertive in claiming what she saw as her rights. She said that her mother stood up to other people, but not to her brothers-in-law. Dalal didn't like this behaviour of her mother's, and didn't want to invite the same control over her life, she said. Her mother and uncles disapproved of her new independence, and her uncles particularly disapproved of her part-time job, frequently exhorting her to quit.

Dalal believed that her claim on freedom and independence was related to their relocation to the West Bank. One day she mused, "I think I had more power in American than I have here." Why did she think that, I asked. Dalal replied, "Because they [her paternal uncles] were in such a rush to get us [her mother and siblings] back here." Before returning to the West Bank she had been accepted into a pre-med. program at a university in her hometown in the US, and had professional aspirations. She reported being deceived into moving to the West Bank, originally agreeing to go only for a summer break. Once in the West Bank her uncles confiscated the return portion of her airline ticket. Her mother lived on a minimal income in the West Bank, derived from her teaching job with a local school, and dressmaking and hair-cutting from her home.

Consequently, Dalal herself was given only a small stipend from which she was required to purchase her lunches at university, personal toiletries, and transportation. According to Dalal, her paternal uncles were delinquent, in both her eyes and her mother's, in providing adequate financial support. But Dalal also felt that there was a financial double standard at work in her family because her brothers were given anything they requested. She was determined to take on a job in the West Bank in order to save up enough money to pay for her return to the US, but was also worried that if she did take on a job, her mother would force her to pay her own tuition costs at university, thus depleting any savings she might accumulate.

Sometimes, Dalal reported, when she'd been angry she had taken to wearing a short skirt out of the house and retorting to her mother's protests that she has nothing else to wear. Of this new form of rebellion she said, "In America I never wore short skirts and makeup....I never wore that until I came here....it's my body, it's my lips [and when someone comments on my clothes or makeup] next time I'll wear more [makeup or revealing clothes]."

When Dalal wore short skirts and makeup she was doing and signifying several things. First, she was asserting herself as an American woman who has individual rights over her body and representation of herself. Second, by doing so, she was violating local codes of respectable dress, calling the capability of her mother (to raise good Palestinian daughters) and respect for her paternal uncles into question. Third, she made a direct link between her lack of access to economic resources and her weak family position, and at the same time challenged the legitimacy of her situation by implying that she would dress decently and appropriately as a good Muslim village girl if adequate finances were made available to her. This brings us back to her American self in the US who held down a part-time job, thus affording her some measure of autonomy from the family. However, we are also given to understand that short skirts and makeup were not typical of Dalal's usual dress in the US, and so to attire herself this way in the West Bank was a provocative attempt to turn her mother's and her uncles' attempts to control her sexuality upside down by moving her to Palestine.

Sometimes resistance can take on a self-destructive form, reminding us that resistance does not necessarily manifest itself in constructive acts that result in increased empowerment. During her senior high school year in the West Bank Laila occasioned the concern of one of her teachers. This teacher, who happened to be American, had asked them to write a journal as part of their class homework, which he would grade regularly. It became apparent to him during the course of reading her journal entries that Laila was anorexic. He brought this to the attention of her parents, who sought family counselling as a remedy. According to Laila, the onset of her anorexia began when the family had returned to the US for a summer visit after their first year in Palestine. Laila said that when she found out that they were returning to Palestine a week earlier than had originally

been planned, and that they weren't ever coming back to the US to live, she stopped eating: "How could I eat when my dad was telling me 'Oh you're never coming back [to the US] and stuffing himself like a pig?" Laila recounts, "We came back a week early because my parents wanted to eat rice and meat [traditional fare at a family wedding]." Laila recalled the development of her anorexia as follows:

> I always had a lump in my throat [at first when her parents told her that she wasn't returning to the US] and so I couldn't eat....[later on] I had this image of people being depressed and not eating [i.e. this was what depressed people do]....I went on strike....No one was noticing that I needed help....they thought I was trying to lose weight....There was a point where if I wasn't Muslim I would have killed myself....Not eating numbed my emotions....[I felt that] if you eat you lose control because all of your emotions and feelings come back....Every time I tried to eat I'd feel guilt because I shouldn't have been eating because I was depressed....I'd think of my situation and I wouldn't want to eat....My hair fell out, I had no nails left, I had no light in my eyes [I was dying].

When Laila refused food, particularly rice and meat, at the homes of her family, they began to think that she was sick. However, her father said, "I don't care if she never eats, she's never going back to America." Finally, Laila decided to eat again, she told me, because "I didn't want to die....When I looked at myself in the mirror I looked like a skeleton....I looked like an old lady....I looked on eating as medicine."

Laila's anorexia was a deployment of bodily practice, and an act of investment in identity options.[2] As the passage of Laila's above narrative indicates, she was conscious of anorexia as a strategy (one hint here is her characterisation of anorexia as being "on strike" in imitation of Susie Orbach's book on the subject, Hunger Strike [1986]). Cloward and Piven (1979) remark on how women's resistance is often destructively directed inwards. And anorexia, as protest, has resonance in both Middle Eastern and American culture. Recent research indicates that body image concern and dieting is prevalent amongst adolescent Palestinian girls in the Ramallah area (Mansour, Awartani 1998, 8).

Anyone who has visited the Middle East soon realises how important hospitality, particularly the serving and eating of food and drink, is to sociability in the region. Richard Tapper and Sami Zubaida (1994, 12) emphasise eating as a social act that demonstrates solidarity and common identity as well as a marker of relations of authority and honour:

> Those who eat together implicitly mark their common identity and equality, particularly on religious occasions....But at the same time, commensal occasions can also reinforce structures of authority, between men and women, old and young, powerful and weak,

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[2] This is not to suggest that Laila was not anorexic. Therapists who have worked with anorexics soon recognise that gender identity and resistance are key issues in the treatment of these girls. Anorexia is, among other things, a deeply rooted form of control, and perhaps "blackmail", over which girls, and other sufferers, lose control.

> between classes and ethnic groups, both in the family context and also in feasts, since these are usually sponsored, or organized and financed, by someone in authority....those who eat the food he (or she) provides implicitly accept these claims....*Refusal to eat another's food may be seen as an explicit challenge to honour; in some cases, it might be a tactical move by a rebel against authority, or a plaintiff in a dispute*....Throughout the Middle East, both giving food (feeding) and receiving food (being fed) have complex implications of status and honour [emphasis mine].

"[F]ood...", claim Ibrahim Muhawi and Sharif Kanaana (1989, 37), "is considered the property of the partriarch." Thus, the precedent for Laila's anorexia had already been culturally, socially, and historically set. In the Palestinian context her refusal to eat signified a challenge to her parent's--particularly her father's--authority, and perhaps even the legitimacy of their power over her.

The timing of its onset, and the foods she particularly refused to eat, which are typical of Palestinian cooking, demonstrate both an articulation with American identity and a refusal to "take in" Palestinianness. Laila confided to me that she had no trouble eating at McDonald's in West Jerusalem, but only in the presence of friends and not her family, suggesting a throwback to her American identity. As Ana Maria Alonso (1994, 386) notes, "Not surprisingly, gendered alimentary tropes (e.g. cooking, food, digestion) are also salient in national discourses". Indeed, anorexia is the quintessential white, middle class, high-achieving American teenage female disease (Nasser 1986; Brumberg 1988; Nasser 1988). Several theorists writing about illness, and about anorexia in particular, have argued that the body is a metaphor, a social, physical, and cultural artefact, and that illness, including anorexia, is a social act (Bordo 1985-86; Caskey 1986; Orbach 1986; Scheper-Hughes, Lock 1987).

Theorists and therapists seem to concur that anorexia is about gender identity, where the starvation of the body is a rejection of womanhood that results in the cessation of menstruation and the reshaping of the female body into boyish form (Bordo 1985-86; Caskey 1986; Orbach 1986; Brumberg 1988). Being female in the West Bank denied Laila the privileges that she desperately sought, particularly freedom to relocate to the US and autonomy over marriage choices, which seemed to be automatically conferred on males. Her own brother, a less talented and less mature student, was virtually guaranteed return to the US to attend university and was not subject to discussions of his marriageability and choices of marriage partners, as Laila had been. Most importantly in this regard, self-starvation is an accomplishment and a bodily demonstration of control in an arena where she felt she had little scope for either (Bordo 1985-86; Caskey 1986; Orbach 1986; Brumberg 1988). The onset of her anorexia coincided with the knowledge that her parents did not intend to send her back to the US for university. This was a desperate bid for control over her situation.

These case studies demonstrate that American-Palestinian girls not only juggle a variety of possible versions of femininity and womanhood, but they also act these out through diverse strategies.[3] The strategies the girls enact also tell us much about what is involved in negotiating power as an unmarried American-Palestinian girl. Issues of honour and marriage, work and financial independence, education, place of residence, dress, and even bodily strength and integrity, all afford both possibilities and constraints. These themes, as we will see below, emerge repeatedly as sites of contestation in the other case studies outlined in this chapter.

### Negotiating relational rights and the appearance of conformity

Three major issues--covering (wearing a headscarf or a *mandil* or *hijab*), education, and marriage--dominated the lives of and were the subjects of negotiation by the girls at the time of our discussions. As unmarried Palestinian-American girls of marriageable age, their acts, decisions, and personal narratives on these issues put into high relief the identities they were deploying, experimenting with, or trying to establish. The girls tutored each other, particularly in the case of learning about Islam and making the decision to cover, but also in their rights in engagement and marriage. In this way, similar to Chinese-Americans in the US, the girls taught each other how to be American-Palestinian girls in the West Bank:

> the making of Chinese-American culture--how ethnicity is imagined, practised, continued--is worked out as much between ourselves and our communities as it is transmitted from one generation to another (Lowe 1991, 27).

Likewise, Fischer (1986, 195-6) also writes about "hyphenated identities" as learned intra-generationally rather than passed from one generation to the next:

> ethnicity is something reinvented and reinterpreted in each generation by each individual...Ethnicity is not something that is simply passed on from generation to generation, taught and learned....to be Chinese-American is not the same thing as being Chinese in America. In this sense there is no role model for becoming Chinese-American. It is a matter of finding a voice or style that does not violate one's several components of identity. In part, such a process of assuming an ethnic identity is an insistence on a pluralist, multidimensional, or multi-faceted concept of self: one can be many different things...

Being an unmarried American-Palestinian returnee girl is a "new ethnicity" (Back 1996) in the West Bank, and was something that their parents could offer them limited assistance in working out. Thus, peers seemed to act as examples to each other. In fact, for most of the girls I spoke to,

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[3] I use the term "strategy" here cautiously, and in a particular sense, where strategy is not always conscious, but is motivated by frequently unconscious investments in particular identity options.

the experience of having direct, daily contact with American-Palestinian peers was a new one, and proved to be reassuring and fulfilling for almost all.

As I suggested earlier in the chapter, identity is constituted by a set of practices based on investment in discursively constructed subject positions (Henriques et al. 1984; de Lauretis 1987; Butler 1990a; Mahoney, Yngvesson 1992; Moore 1994a). Creative spaces for transformation and subversion lie in the relations between representations of frequently contradictory or competing identities (Butler 1988, 1990a, 1990b; Moore 1994a). Yet subversion and other modes of resistance need not take dramatic and even explosive forms, such as in Butler's (1990a, 1990b) example of drag. Indeed, many girls and women, given their subordinate social and economic positions, cannot afford to be flamboyant in their modes of confrontation and methods of change. As Maureen Mahoney and Barbara Yngvesson (1992, 63) remind us, "the invention of new forms is shown to be shaped by and dependent on old meaning, and the interplay of resistance and determination produces practices and understandings that are simultaneously of an existing order and a reimagining of it." In fact, the appearance of conformity "provides security and the social recognition that is a prerequisite for agency", and even forms of subversive agency (Torab 1996, 245). However, one must take care to avoid the mistake of assuming that every subversive act is a socially critical and progressive one (Fensham 1996).

In what follows I will discuss how the girls' approaches to familiar forms of covering, education, and marriage were imbued with new meanings. As with Indian-American women in the US, the girls' negotiations over these fields of practice reveal subtle mediations of identity and variations of meaning and performance:

> Each process--invention, rebellion, reinvention--requires an understanding of how these women were expected to signify what was "Indian" about their families and their communities, and how these signifiers were tied to class status and the enforcement of monogamous, endogamous heterosexuality. These codings make "being Indian" not only a question of ethnicity but also of identity, which is broader in scope (Das Gupta 1997, 574).

But in constructing and inventing their identities, most of the girls I spoke to resembled Das Gupta's (1997) respondents in that they wanted to find ways to make both their Palestinian and their American identities consistent, to fit together, or at least not to wage war against each other or do battle against their parents. Thus, their reinvention and reconfiguration of familiar practices to create new ways of being.

When speaking to the girls, particularly about their ambitions to go to university in the US but also about more mundane matters such as going to parties or shopping trips to Jerusalem, I noticed that they frequently referred to the process of needing to "convince" their parents,

especially their fathers, or paternal uncles if their fathers were absent (also see Rosen 1984; Caton 1987; Eisenlohr 1996, 262-4). To be successful at "convincing" a parent was to secure permission from them for participation in the proposed activity. Sometimes the timeframe of the process of "convincing" a parent could stretch out for a period of months, especially in the case of attendance at a university in the US. At first I was surprised at the length of the negotiation timetable, being accustomed to white North American teenagers' more confrontational and speedy approaches to "convincing". The girls' commitment to a lengthy, patient, and sometimes subtle process of "convincing" was a demonstration of Joseph's (1994b) notion of rights in Lebanon as being relationally negotiated, rather than individually forged or claimed, legislated, or based on universality. Yet upon reading Lawrence Rosen's (1984, 176-9) description of the Moroccan view of the person as a being in context, whose character is variably a function of context, I could see the fit between Rosen's Moroccans and the girls' parents. For instance,

> [Notions of] [g]rowth and development are inappropriate simply because people do not, in the Moroccan view, change from within anymore than they can create a view of the moral order from within. Rather, people change their contexts,...their environment, their situated networks of obligation....A person's character is, therefore, a function of these social contexts, and though one's character does not, in our sense, develop from within, it is certainly possible that a change of context may profoundly alter the person (Rosen 1984, 175, 178).

Not only did Rosen's words put into a different perspective the parents' decision to move their daughters who they were concerned about in the US to the West Bank, but it also made clear for me the need, in the girls' eyes, for the lengthy timeframe for "convincing". The girls knew that they needed to demonstrate to their parents their abilities to deal responsibly and maturely with the activity they were proposing, and this meant that they needed to perform to their parents' expectations in the West Bank. However, while parents were often pleased with their daughters' performances, they frequently did not acquiesce to their daughters' persuasion tactics when it came to granting permission to move to the US without a husband. If we accept Rosen's description of Moroccans' view of the person as also applicable to the girls' parents' own views, then we realize that the parents felt that what might hold true for their daughters' behaviour and abilities in the West Bank did not necessarily translate to how they evaluated their daughters' abilities to function in the US. In fact, many of the girls lamented that their fathers did not "trust" them and were angry that their parents didn't seem to believe that they possessed sufficient inner resources to deal responsibly with the American context. Similar to these girls' objections are the complaints of Cainkar's (1996, 51) interviewees who "want to be trusted rather than monitored, they feel they are capable of staying within the cultural limits and do not need to be controlled or watched."

Nonetheless, within this world-view and characterization of the person relations and contexts do not remain static. Rosen (1984, 4) refers to a process of negotiation, even between those engaged in unequal relationships, in order to shape the terms of relations between persons:

> the process of bargaining out the terms of their relations, the definition of their situation, and the implications of their attachment were at the heart of the way such ties were conceived and formed. The terms of the relationship acquired meaning only as the bargains struck in and through them took shape. Reality of the Moroccan is the distribution of ties that he or she possesses to others.

Another way of thinking about the ties that Rosen mentions above is found in Joseph's (1994b, 274) characterization of "relational rights":

> rights inhered in sets of relationships that people established with others. Relational rights were properties of relationships. They shifted and transformed as relationships changed.

Most significantly, Joseph (1994b, 280) points out, "To be obligated and to have others obligated to you was a sign of successful negotiation of relationships." Rights, then, stem from a series of obligations forged within relationships. In Palestine, Annalies Moors (1996b) found that women frequently refrain from claiming their rightful inheritance share, thus adding to their brothers' shares in an unspoken bargain that should they require it in the future, they could turn to these same brothers for material support. Thus, these women establish their brothers' obligation to them, rights to their support if future need demands it, by voluntarily abandoning their inheritance claims, an action which immediately benefits their brothers by increasing their own inheritance shares.

The girls I spoke to and Cainkar's (1996) respondents held typically North American and individualist views of the person and character. Thus, they believed that if they demonstrated to their parents that they were dutiful, obedient Palestinian girls, they would or should be granted by their parents a measure of trust. Of course, if the parents were similar in outlook to Rosen's Moroccans, they would only see their daughters' behaviour as contextual and not relevant to other situations or places, such as the US. Nonetheless, the context in which the bargaining parameters were set seemed to frame a situation in which the girls deployed familiar and acceptable modes of behaviour in order to leverage rights to and spaces for behaviours and practices that were unconventional for unmarried West Bank village girls. These practices also afforded them the ability to maintain and continue to develop their fantasies of selves as independent, strong, and self-determining young women. In some cases, as we will see in the case studies below, the girls did "give" (or sometimes, "give in") in order to secure obligation on the part of their parents, other family members, and fiancés.

The content of negotiations within each American-Palestinian family with which I was familiar varied, and the positions fathers, mothers, and brothers assumed were also different from family to family. While many fathers were the driving force behind the family's move to the West Bank, this was not always the case. For instance, Lana, whose father commuted between the US and his wife and children in the West Bank, told me that it was her mother who took a firm position on the family being located in Palestine. Her father, on the other hand, wanted his family to live with him in the US. Other mothers were sympathetic to their daughters' wishes to return to the US and acted as mediators between their daughters and their husbands. For instance, as we will see below, Sara's mother tutored her in negotiation tactics that ensured her successful bargaining with her father to return to Canada the following year for her university studies. Even mothers who could be extremely supportive of their daughters' ambitions could at the same time act in ways that seemed to work against their daughters' calculation of their own interests. For example, while Alia's mother supported her in her desire to return to the US for her university education, she also put pressure on an unwilling Alia to become engaged. It did seem to me that mothers who were educated or who worked outside of the home themselves in North America also supported their daughters in similar ambitions. Nonetheless, this did not exclude marriage from their immediate or short-term plans for their daughters. It cannot be forgotten in all of this that mothers were likely also forging their own bargains with their husbands and their husbands' families as well as with their daughters. If mothers argued too strenuously on behalf of their daughters they might meet with considerable criticism from their husbands' families, as Nancy's mother did when she successfully supported her daughters' access to university education against her husband and his family. Most of the time mothers were possibly working to secure arrangements that allowed room for their daughters to develop themselves as young women while at the same time ensured that their own statuses as good successful mothers were safeguarded. This can most dramatically be observed in Linda's story below where her mother pressured her into an early engagement, and supported her in attaining a university education by schooling her in the means to successfully negotiate with her fiancé. Brothers could either act as supports of their sisters, intervening on their sisters' behalf to argue the justice and logic of their sisters' cases with their fathers, or they could participate in the thwarting of their sisters and their desires. The only constant seemed to be the girls' sisters' positions. I never met a girl who did not claim their sisters' support in their families, and this consistency of position can be read as the close coincidence of sisters' interests within any one family. The positions each family member took in the girls' negotiations were determined by a web of relations that shaped gender and individual fantasies of themselves, including their images of themselves as Palestinians and as Americans, women and men, mothers and fathers, daughters, sons, sisters, and brothers. These relations in every case emanated from individual family histories, as well as larger social, cultural, economic, and political forces that shaped the context within which these smaller dynamics of identity played out.

In all cases, these negotiations had to be subtly and carefully managed if they were not to alarm their families and set their Palestinian neighbours to talking. As Deniz Kandiyoti (1993, 380) reminds us, "for women, the 'modern' is always perilously close to the 'alien', particularly when contemplated codes of behaviour can be identified as an outright betrayal of the expectations of their own communities". This possibility posed special problems for American-Palestinian girls, who were already deemed not just "American" and thus also "alien", but also dangerous to the "traditional" social fabric of the West Bank village and the reputations of their own families.

## Covering as a mode of agency and belongingness

One of the ways American-Palestinian girls counteracted their "alien" image was to begin to wear the *mandil.* I will argue, aside from demonstrating and being an expression of piety, covering was also an important expression of Muslim identity, something to which American-Palestinian girls felt they had legitimate claim, and also something that at the same time granted them Palestinian credentials. This piety also provided them a platform from which to claim rights to education, choice in marriage, and freedom from sexual harassment. Finally, covering was a marker of a kind of adulthood for unmarried girls in a context where the only other means to this status is marriage. This might have been particularly important to American-Palestinian girls who are deprived of the adult status they had come to expect in the US after reaching the age of eighteen or upon graduation from high school. Nonetheless, as I will explain, the girls also had to seriously consider issues of social comportment and marriageability when making the decision to cover.

It is common to see adolescent girls and women wearing Islamic dress, or a combination of western and Islamic dress in the West Bank. For instance, teenage schoolgirls frequently wear jeans, a loose shirt or sweater over top, and a white, opaque headscarf tied around their necks and secured behind their heads or pinned under their chins. While it is rare to see pre-pubescent girls wearing the *mandil,* in some villages it is practised. Some girls and women wear the *jilbab* as well as the *mandil,* and in the West Bank the *jilbab* is made of fabric in solid, dark, conservative colours, worn to the ankles or to the ground, and is loose and untailored. According to Alia, more religious women prefer a *jilbab* to be ankle-length in order to remain clean for prayers. A ground-length *jilbab* collects dirt from the street. The fashionably cut and tailored Islamic suits commonly seen on the streets of Cairo and other Middle Eastern cities have not yet made an appearance in the West Bank. A tiny minority of women wear face veils and gloves, and in my observation this is a very recent innovation in the West Bank as I never saw any women so attired during my fieldwork in 1993. In her article discussing the "*hijab* campaign" in Gaza

during the *intifada*, where Hamas and Islamic Jihad successfully imposed the wearing of the *mandil* by almost all sexually mature girls and women, Rema Hammami (1990, 25) claims that these political groups "endowed the *hijab* with new meanings of piety and political affiliation." Covering no longer holds the same political salience it once might have done in Gaza during the *intifada*, but it still signifies piety on the part of the wearer.

A survey conducted in Palestine during the summer of 1992 asked about the acceptability of women wearing "western" dress. Approximately 35% of West Bank (not including Jerusalem) women deemed "western" dress acceptable attire and only about 25% of their male counterparts agreed. In Jerusalem, almost 70% of women and around 60% of men found "western" dress acceptable (Heiberg, Øvensen 1994, 252). Approximately 15% of Jerusalem women would be "insulted" if a female family member appeared in public without a headscarf and over 35% of Jerusalem men reported that they, too, would feel "insulted". In the West Bank, just over 45% of women and about 60% of men would feel "insulted" in these circumstances (Heiberg, Øvensen 1994, 253). While these numbers reflect regional differences (Gazans were also surveyed), they are more reflective of urban-rural and class differences of opinion.[4] From these results, we can presume that similar to the women of Cairo in the 1980s (MacLeod 1991, 115), most Muslim Palestinian women and girls, particularly those resident in villages, must contend with the decision of whether or not to wear the *mandil*. As in Cairo, however, the dominant West Bank discourse about wearing the *mandil* was that it must be the girl's own choice to do so (MacLeod 1991, 108-9). An imposed *hijab* was frowned upon by everyone I ever heard speak of the matter, covered or not.

I asked all of the girls I spoke to who did not wear the *mandil* why they had made that decision. Only two of them, Laila and Amal, said that they doubted they would ever cover. Laila claimed that her urban upper-middle class, well-educated parents thought the practice was "backward", and Laila herself didn't consider it an option. Amal and her parents, while deeply nationalist, were not in the least "religious". Amal was highly critical of the upbringing of most of her counterparts, steeped in "deformed customs" and disciplined by notions of what was "*haram*" and "*a'ib*".

All of the other girls indicated that while they did not wear the *mandil* at the present time because they weren't "ready", they wanted to wear it in the future. MacLeod reports that few of her

[4] The survey revealed that 62% of West Bank residents were rural dwellers, and that while over 60% of West Bank village heads of household were categorised as being of low and lower-middle socio-economic status (based on education level, occupation type, number of consumer durables, and housing comfort index level), over 65% of Jerusalem household heads fell into the upper-middle and high categories. While the overall Palestinian population was found to be 96% Muslim, Arab Jerusalem was 15% Christian, as was

younger respondents criticised the idea of wearing the *mandil* or said that they would never wear it. Instead, she says, they delayed the issue by claiming that they had not yet had the "feeling" that they should cover (MacLeod 1991, 115-16).

The girls I spoke to took the decision to cover extremely seriously, and it seemed to be a move that few took lightly. However, a former Friends School teacher told me that a few American-Palestinian girls in a grade ten class she taught experimented with wearing the *mandil*, and one eventually stopped wearing it after two weeks. Another also removed it only to begin wearing it again a year later. Wearing the *mandil* for these girls seemed like just one more style to try out, or a temporary fashion statement (Interview with Dina Abou-El-Haj, Ramallah, 25 April 1998). Nonetheless, I was told that once a girl or woman makes the decision to "put it on" she cannot then take it off. Those who didn't wear it were waiting until they were "ready" to do so. Being "ready" it seemed, was a matter of having the right feeling, or even receiving a message from Allah to encourage them (also see MacLeod 1991, 108-9). Some girls told me that dreams of "fire" often presage the decision to wear the *mandil*, something a few of them said they heard about in *din* class. For instance, Khadija reported that some women get scared and have "bad dreams" before they cover. When I asked Nancy why she didn't cover she replied, "I'm not ready....I've just begun to pray in the last month....lately I've been having dreams of fire and I've wondered if that's a sign." Judging from Nancy's response, a measure of religiosity or experience of religious practice is a prerequisite for or a part of being "ready". At one of the schools the girls were learning in their religion class that they would burn in hell if they refrained from wearing the *mandil*. Indeed, this was also explained to me by a young Birzeit University student who was born and raised in the West Bank.

Some girls I spoke to alluded to "wearing it [the *hijab*] 100%" or "doing it all the way". With more questioning it became clear to me that in the eyes of these girls there was a "right" way to cover that included not only doing it for the "right reasons" (i.e. piety), but also in wearing it the "right" way (also see Hessini 1994, 42). For instance, during our first interview Sara explained to me that her mother wore a headscarf, but, she emphasized, her mother wore her *mandil* in a different way than most women, with the ends of it wrapped behind her neck, twisted, and then brought up around the crown of her head. She said, "It's more preferable to wear it the way I do [wrapped around her neck], but my mother feels more comfortable that [her] way." Ally told me, "I want to [cover] but when you wear it you have to wear it right....When I do it I want to go the whole way [with the *mandil* and the *jilbab*]." I asked Nadia why she didn't cover, and if her mother and sisters did. Nadia replied that while her older sister covered, her mother didn't. Then she described how her mother wore her headscarf in a way similar to Sara's mother. So, while

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11% of the urban Ramallah population, constituting over 90% of the total Christian Palestinian population

Nadia's mother wore a headscarf, according to her daughter she was not covered. As for herself, Nadia said, "I really want to wear it....but there's something in me that won't....but I know soon I will....But when I wear it I want it to be 100%....I feel like I'm still kind of young sometimes."

Aisha, who didn't cover, was the only girl to offer a gendered critique of the practice: "I hate having to wear the *hijab* because of guys....I would do it for Allah, but not for guys....because it's for guys I can't do it now....I will wear it eventually but I'm not ready yet." However, months later, shortly after her engagement, she reflected on her earlier response and wrote:

> I don't cover right now because I don't feel ready. Covering is not a joke, I truly believe in it and want to do it. I just want to be committed 100%. I don't have any doubts, but the reason I am not ready is because selfishly I want to have a little fun before. I don't totally agree with what you quoted [see paragraph above], I may have felt it, but only a bit. I meant I wish men could control themselves. I hate the way it makes me feel when a man on the streets looks at me. They take away everything, and try to take away your dignity. Especially after I got engaged. I feel as though they're looking at something that doesn't belong to them, and that I am allowing them to look at it. My fiancé doesn't really agree with me. He thinks that I should wait a while longer before I wear it. But I think I'm going to end up doing [it] with or without his consent. For that is what Allah wants for me, and I think it's only a small way to thank Allah.

Here are all the usual narrations on the seriousness of the decision and its significance as a gesture to Allah. But alongside these musings is a critique of men's sexual behaviour. Paradoxically, while Aisha did not want to wear the *mandil* before her engagement because "it is for guys" who could not seem to keep their eyes off of the body that was hers, after her engagement she resented these same men and boys looking at the body that was now her fiancé's (as implied by Aisha). At the same time, her engaged status meant that she was freer to make the decision to cover, as I will explain below. Yet in doing so, she would be contradicting her fiancé's wishes concerning the presentation of the body that now belonged to him. Several girls told me that husbands or fiancés who prevented them from wearing the *mandil* took the ultimate responsibility in Allah's eyes, risking the ultimate destiny of "burning" after death. However, other girls told me that husbands and fiancés didn't have the "right" to prevent them from covering. Finally, Aisha had her own reservations about covering, still wanting to have a "little fun".

Dina, too, said that she didn't cover, although several of her good friends did, because she wasn't "ready" yet. But because "it's a part of the religion" she some day wants to wear the *mandil.* Several months later she wrote a follow-up response that echoes some of Aisha's concerns about "fun":

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(Heiberg, Øvensen 1994, 23-4, 43, 232).

> I'm getting too old to say that I'm not "ready" yet. In fact, I *hate* that excuse. I really would like to give a better, more noble excuse, but I think the only reason is that I'm afraid that it *will* affect my life in a (not really negative way but) not-really-positive way. My mom would like me to cover, but my dad thinks I'm still young and shouldn't have to cover.
>
> I think the only reason a person should cover is for God, not for any other reason. But if other girls do this, it doesn't mean I'm going to look down at them or their reasons.

Dina was also afraid of the possible constraints that may accompany wearing the *mandil*. She posits the usual reasons for covering, but also acknowledges that girls might wear the *mandil* for other reasons. The differing opinions of her father and mother towards the issue might reveal that her nationalist father is less "religious" than her mother, or a difference in calculation of Dina's marriageability. For instance, her father may have been encouraging her to wait for the unspoken reason that he would like to see her engaged first. Her mother may have been worried about her marriageability in the West Bank if she returns to the US to attend university uncovered. It should be noted that she had already secured her father's permission to return to the US the following year, and this might have contributed to some of her reluctance.

Lana makes more explicit some of Aisha's and Dina's possible reservations about the social and recreational restrictions posed by the *hijab*:

> I think it's the right thing to do and I want to do it eventually....but I don't have the courage to do it right now....once you stick it on there's so many things you can't do and there are so many things I want to do....like water-skiing--I've never done it and there's no way I can do it with it on....If I went to America with it on I would feel so uncomfortable....basically, I feel like you've got to be settled down to put it on.

As Lana indicates, the prospect of wearing the *mandil* in the US gave pause to several of the girls I spoke to over the issue. While a very few were looking forward to the prospect of wearing the *mandil* in the US, as a marker or sign of an identity that they were proud of, most felt insecure about what wearing the *mandil* would mean for their imagined lives in the US. Wearing the headscarf, and other dress associated with being "Muslim", is a visible sign not only of religion, but of the meaning of that religion and of Arab culture in the context of the American mainstream , and is thus a controversial issue amongst the Arab community in the US:

> The conflicting practices surrounding the covering of women's heads are painful for many....Some [Muslim Arab-Americans] see it as furthering North American hostility by reinforcing negative stereotypes of underdevelopment and repression in Muslim countries (Abu-Laban 1991, 28).

In Chicago's Palestinian community, Cainkar (1994, 101) reports that middle-class semi-"Americanised" Palestinian women who wear western dress tend to view their more conservative counterparts who wear "traditional Palestinian dress" with their hair covered as "backward" and

oppressed. On the other hand, their "backward" contemporaries view them as "not real Palestinians".

Khadija wasn't covered, and while her brother had put some pressure on her to do so, Khadija didn't feel "ready": "My brother's told me to wear it....I don't know if I would have the strength to wear it [in the US]." Ally, whose aunts wore the *mandil* in the US, was more explicit about her concerns in this regard: "I want to cover my hair, but the one thing I'm worried about is that I want to go back to America. I know I shouldn't be worried about it, but I am....over there [the US] they call you 'towel-head.'" Dalal put her similar concerns in a larger political framework. When I asked her why she didn't cover she replied, "I'm not ready for that yet...and I know that I'm going back to America." By this she was referring to her concerns that in the US the *mandil* would distance people from her, and she also felt that in the US wearing the *mandil* would make her conspicuously "Muslim", and thus, a target for racist and xenophobic attacks. Dalal was influenced by the US reaction immediately after the Oklahoma bombing in 1995 where officials stated without evidence that it was an Arab terrorist attack. Dalal also criticised Hamas's political stance and their presentation in the world media: "They're just using religion to get what they want." She was disturbed that Hamas and similar groups reflected on her as an Arab Muslim.

Aisha, Dina, and Lana were probably right to be concerned about the potential impact of wearing the *mandil* on their lives. "Muslim" dress has the effect of enforcing codes of behaviour in a way that women in secular dress do not experience, even if devout Muslims:

> For Muslim women the issue of multiple worlds is more pronounced than it is for men because of the issue of dress and visibility. Dress, whether one identifies with it as an issue or not, has a subconsciously powerful impact....an American Muslim woman, to a greater extent than her male counterpart, faces the possibility of acculturating to Islamic cultural norms at a visible level and encounters greater pressure to modify aspects of her life-style even in the most ordinary processes of daily social interaction (Hermansen 1991, 193).

For instance, Ally offered this as part of her rationale for not being "ready" to cover:

> This sounds stupid, but when I get married I want to have a real wedding. I want to wear a real dress and have my hair. But if you're covered you have to have girls and guys separated and I don't want that. I want to have a real party.

In another example, Alia, who covered, was worried about her attendance at her school's year-end party. Surprised, I said that she didn't do anything improper, that she hadn't danced with any boys, drank alcohol, or worn anything improper. But she responded that in Islam one is supposed to avoid any temptation or anything that could lead to temptation. Alia felt "funny" about her attendance because she was the only one in *jilbab* ("I felt underdressed") and because the other girls in her class who wore the *jilbab* had stayed home, she wondered if perhaps it hadn't been the right

thing to go. She conceded, however, that she did have fun at the party. Alia said that being covered makes you more susceptible to "talk" because people look for you to do something wrong so they can say, "Well, why is she wearing it?"

So far I have focused on the normative discourses and practices of covering that are prevalent in the West Bank. But what I found particularly interesting about American-Palestinian girls' practices of covering was their strategic use of the *hijab*, what it signified about their identities, and what spaces for agency were created in the relations between the two. Although the girls said that piety was the only "right" reason to wear the *mandil*, I observed that there seemed to be a confluence of context and desire that encouraged girls to make the decision to cover.

I did not encounter any American-Palestinian girls who said they were forced by their families to wear *hijab*, although I suspect that the lessons in some religion classes, with their discussions of "fire" and "burning" could influence some girls' decision-making (also see Abu Odeh 1993, 35). Five out of the fifteen girls I spoke to covered, and all but one of them made her decision to do so once living in the West Bank. Often, already covered girls provided their peers with encouragement to cover and acted as role models to girls not yet wearing *hijab* (*cf.* Lowe 1991). Or, as in one case I heard of, girls might make a pledge with each other to begin wearing the *mandil*. Alia told me the story of her first day wearing a headscarf. She had already been encouraged and inspired by three classmates of hers in her new West Bank school who wore *hijab*. The first day she herself came to school covered she didn't have her own *mandil* and instead wore a *hatta* (man's scarf) of her father's, but Reem, one of her American-Palestinian classmates, just looked at her approvingly and said, "It'll do".

All but one of the girls who covered reported that members of their families had discouraged them from wearing *hijab*, which contradicts the popular notion that these girls are "forced" by their families to wear the *mandil*. Several of the discouraging fathers held nationalist rather than Islamist values, or were professional or upper-middle class; both positions subscribe to a vision of the modernised woman that the *hijab* symbolically contradicts in the West Bank (also see Jayawardena 1988; Ahmed 1992; Lindisfarne-Tapper, Ingham 1997). And as I will discuss later, at least one fiancé was unhappy with his fiancée's decision to cover.

In other cases, parents and other family members discouraged the girls from covering out of concern for their marriage prospects. Many of the girls said that their parents and families wanted them to "show" themselves in order to attract prospective husbands (also see MacLeod 1991, 116-17, 118-19). When parents and families wanted girls to "show" themselves this did not mean that they wanted them to wear revealing or too-tight clothing, but that they were concerned that without sufficient display of the girls' beauty, eligible men would not "see" them.

The *hijab* also signifies to the observer that the wearer adheres to certain norms associated with social conservatism. Several of the girls' parents were concerned that only conservative men, whose values would be incompatible with their daughters', would come to their homes to ask for their covered daughters.

The Friends Boys School in Ramallah provides an interesting setting in which to observe the class, regional, and national dimensions of *hijab*. Friends, as I have already mentioned, is a prestigious co-ed private high school owned by American Quakers (teachers and administrators, however, are almost all Palestinian). The student population is composed of both local Palestinian teenagers, mostly from urban middle and upper-middle class Ramallah families, and English-speaking, mostly American, teenagers who have been relocated to West Bank villages. One English-speaking grade eleven student wrote a social studies paper on the incidence of wearing the *mandil* and *jilbab* by students at the school. By examining school yearbooks from the years 1992-95, and observing the 1996 student population, she concluded that the majority of students who wore the *mandil* or the *mandil* and the *jilbab* were English-speaking (Khalaf 1996). In fact, the ratios, if not the actual numbers themselves (most girls, English-speaking or local, do not cover at the Friends School), are dramatic. From my own study of the school yearbook (FBS 1996) pictures I found that the majority of girls who covered were in their senior year. The English-speaking senior class made up one-third of the total graduating class, and over one-third of the English-speaking girls in the class covered. One local girl in the graduating class also covered. The school offers English-speaking classes in the senior and junior grades only, but English-speaking students are also accepted into the lower grades. This means that the proportion of English-speaking students to local students is, by my estimation, less than one-third; yet, three-quarters of the girls who covered in 1996 were English-speaking.[5] Almost three-quarters of the girls who covered in the 1995 classes were also English-speaking (Khalaf 1996), but, again, they constituted less than one-third of the total Friends student population (FBS 1995).

Why do English-speaking students seem to adopt Muslim dress at a higher rate than their local counterparts? Much of the reason, I believe, can be found in the socio-economic class and residence or locale differences that characterize the two groups of students. However, in order to really understand the motivations behind the decisions by American-Palestinian girls to cover, it is important to explore the meaning of the *hijab* to these girls. In this sense, it must be understood that the *mandil* might hold entirely different meaning for American-Palestinian girls and for local Palestinians, as highlighted in the case of Muslims in Europe with their contemporaries in their "homelands":

> This difference between the women...both underlines the polyvalency of the veil and--at least in the case of the Asian women in Britain and perhaps also the Algerian women in France--recalls the point made earlier about the potentiality for cultural disjuncture between diasporic Muslims and those they leave behind....the practice of veiling has become a politicized act whose meaning shifts depending on the articulation of the local with the global in any particular setting. In short, the perpetuation of the practice of veiling is no unreflective continuation of "tradition", but is a considered response to the way the world is changing" (Ahmed, Donnan 1994, 14-15).

As I have mentioned, to the observer the *hijab* often signifies that the wearer is pious and socially conservative. This meaning has its roots in the way that groups such as the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and Hamas and Islamic Jihad in Palestine have invested the *mandil* with new meanings in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s (el-Guindi 1981; Hammami 1990; MacLeod 1991). None of the covered girls I spoke to aligned themselves with Islamist movements, as was also the case with MacLeod's (1991) respondents, although they all ascribed to piety. Yet Reem Khalaf (1996), our American-Palestinian grade eleven student essay author, attributes additional motivations to the wearing of the *mandil* and the *jilbab* by her counterparts. She introduces her argument by pointing out that Islamic dress is a "requirement in Islam" and that more English-speaking than local students wear such dress at the Friends School. Khalaf then traces the history of events around the first girl at the school, an American-Palestinian, who took the move to wear the *jilbab* in 1990.[6] Speaking of this girl, Khalaf writes: "Arwa provided a good example along with many other English speaking girls who wear the jilbab, why you can't judge and categorize English speaking girls as the 'bad' ones." Here then, is reference to the assumed sexual availability of American-Palestinian girls. The *hijab* and *jilbab* are useful indicators not just of piety, but also of the maintenance of reputations. Khalaf's statement also contains an implicit refutation of the double standard applied to American-Palestinian and local girls, where the American-Palestinian girls feel that while the local girls' behaviour violates standards required to maintain reputation, it is they who are scrutinised and accused of such behaviour. "Sadly enough," Khalaf notes, "this courageous act of faith [wearing the *mandil* and *jilbab*] has yet to achieve the respect for English speaking girls that is so well deserved."

Khalaf's essay also provides other clues. She discusses the problems that Palestinian-American girls have in the US ("Many Arab American students feel that they do not fit in America") and the pressures against openly practising Islam by wearing the *mandil* and the *jilbab*, and concludes that after their relocation to the West Bank many American-Palestinian girls "realize that religion is the right path to living life, and the solution to many problems." Thus, wearing the *mandil* and

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[5] Of the age groups that "covered" (i.e. no girls "covered" in grade eight), the English-speaking student population was probably about one-third (FBS 1996).

[6] Apparently this caused much controversy at the time. According to Khalaf (1996), the school administration was against the wearing of the *jilbab* by any of the students on the grounds that it violated the school's uniform code.

the *jilbab* are again simply expressions of piety. However, I believe that there is more to this set of statements than meet the eye. Before reaching her conclusion, Khalaf contrasts the two student bodies at the Friends by characterising the local students as coming from "liberal and open-minded families" who have a tremendous amount of social freedom, and the English-speaking students as having "more conservative, strict families" whose "parents fear their children adopting too many habits and lifestyles of Americans" and "carry old fashioned thinking, which is how a girl is protected by limiting her freedom".[7] As we have seen, girls' and women's extended social freedom is associated with "American" values. Ironically, the local girls, who are perceived by their communities to be "Palestinian" by virtue of being born and raised in the West Bank, are permitted to act in "American" ways, while the American-Palestinian girls, who are popularly perceived as being "American" and all that this implies, usually have access to quite limited social freedom both in the US and the West Bank. The American-Palestinian girls cannot change the facts of their birth and the location of their upbringing which define them as American nationals. However, Islam is a transnational religion. It is practised all over the world, including the US. The West Bank and local Palestinians carry no monopoly over its practice. Anyone can be a Muslim, provided they submit to Allah and practice the five pillars of faith. American-Palestinian girls, by donning the *mandil*, are claiming an identity as Muslims, and in silent comparison, as better Muslims than their local counterparts. They are certainly refuting their imputed reputation for being sexually available. I would like to add here Dina Abou-El-Haj's observation that the *jilbab* cloaks from view much of the subtle yet provocative body movements, or ways of inhabiting the body, that American-Palestinian girls often unwittingly enact as they walk down West Bank streets (Interview, Ramallah, 25 April 1998). While local Palestinians may question and challenge their Palestinian credentials and their reputations, only Allah has the right to judge their credentials as Muslims.

Further, as I described in chapter four, "religion" is conflated with honour and reputation, and even with Palestinian culture itself by the girls and their families. I found that "[o]vert opposition to the *higab* seems to be very difficult for women, since few are willing to argue that their religion or cultural traditions are in some way wrong" (MacLeod 1991, 115). To do so would be to question not only Allah, but also what many of the girls have been taught to perceive as the essence of what it is to be "Palestinian", something they are in no position to do. With the adoption of the *mandil*, then, the girls are making a claim to "Palestinianness" that cannot be refuted. At the same time, they are denying their "Americanness" insofar as this is defined as being sexually promiscuous (also see Hessini 1994, 51). An example of this system of

[7] Of course, it must be recognized here that Palestinian-American families are not necessarily or inherently "conservative" and "old-fashioned". One could argue instead that it is generally the more conservative Palestinian-American parents who make the decision to relocate themselves and/or their children to the West Bank.

signification can be read in Dalal's recollection that on the first dayshe and her family arrived in the West Bank, her mother put on the *mandil.* Dalal and her sister, she remembered, cried on seeing this because to them it signalled that their mother was never going back to the US. While no one was accusing or suspecting Dalal's mother of promiscuity, the usual attribute of "Americanness" that is applied to American-Palestinian girls, by putting on the*mandil* she was communicating to her daughters a renunciation of America and a commitment to Palestine.

Riham, who began wearing the *hijab* in the US, found it difficult to reconcile her "Americanness" with her outward appearance as a Muslim. In the US she said, "I'm comfortable from the outside but not in the inside....here [in the West Bank] I'm comfortable from the inside but not on the outside", referring to the fact that Palestinians could tell she was American by the way she looked and moved. Her appearance was Middle Eastern in the US, and served to mark the "difference" that she felt "inside". But she found the contradiction of being perceived as an "American" in the West Bank when her "inside" was Muslim and Palestinian difficult to manage. Indeed, Marcia Hermansen (1991, 193) tells of an American Muslim informant who "expressed a greater sense of liminality once she settled in Saudi Arabia with her spouse....[because] there the statement she had made in adopting Islamic dress was considered a normal part of the culture, but being American, she was by definition alien." These examples only serve to illustrate that the context in which one decides to wear the *mandil* plays a large part in the construction of its meaning and its utility in the deployment of identity. However, I suspect that for many of the other American-Palestinian girls who adopt the *mandil* and *jilbab* in the West Bank their new dress serves to "cover" the contradictions of identity that I outlined in chapters three and four in regard to their class and national identities. Islamist dress removes from sight both their outward marking as Americans and the clothing that confuses their local observers about their class position (also see Lindisfarne-Tapper, Ingham 1997, 16-19, 31-2).

Finally, Islam guarantees girls and women certain rights to education, work outside of the home, and choice of marriage partner; it prescribes chastity for both men and women, and wearing the *mandil* offers the right to freedom of movement and freedom from harassment (also see el-Guindi 1981, 481; MacLeod 1991, 113-14; Abu Odeh 1993; Hessini 1994). For instance, one of Leila Hessini's (1994, 47) respondents claimed,

> Wearing the hijab shows that women have a role in the society. Of course I am for women who work outside the home. If not I wouldn't be for the hijab, because inside their households, women don't wear the hijab!

Islam, then proves an attractive option in a context where such rights are not guaranteed elsewhere (i.e. through legislation, social norms, etc.). Additionally, American-Palestinian girls, as I discussed in chapter four, are angry about the double standard applied to themselves and

their brothers where their brothers are granted a great degree of social freedom and are permitted to return or remain in the US to acquire a university education, manage the family business, or pursue a career or their own fortunes. Islam bestows on American-Palestinian girls the moral highground on these and the other issues mentioned, and gives them a position from which they can demand certain rights. From the girls' point of view, Islam must seem the ideal platform as it is also the banner from which those issues, honour and culture, are proclaimed that seem to deny them their rights. Thus, adopting the *mandil* confers upon them the status of believer, adherent, and rightful interpreter of the religion from which they can claim their rights. Piety, then, becomes a source of "gendered agency", allowing women to claim a set of rights and values under the banner of Islam (Torab 1996).

An interesting example of the coincidence of women who are "religious" and their claim to rights usually associated with feminist thinking is provided by Ray Huntington and Bruce Chadwick (1995). In 1994, they surveyed 3,116 refugee camp and village women in the West Bank, their aim being to explore the relationship between educational attainment, employment, political activities, religiosity, age, and family roles. The researchers found that the strongest predictor of attitudes towards women's family roles was religion, but were surprised to discover that "[w]omen who perceive themselves to be more religious also believe they should be less responsible to clean the house and care [for] and discipline children" (Huntington, Chadwick 1995, 301), all tasks associated with the "traditional" Palestinian gendered division of household labour. The researchers conclude, "This finding was not expected, and *suggests that women are free to interpret religion in a very private, personal way*" (Huntington, Chadwick 1995, 303, emphasis mine). I am not sure how "private" or "personal" these women's interpretation of religion was, given that their religiosity seemed to be the strongest indicator associated with their rejection of traditional reproductive roles. To me, this implies a shared understanding of religion amongst them. But what the researchers do highlight, albeit in euphemism, is that these women's interpretation of religion was not consistent with the dominant, male mainstream ("malestream") interpretations, and that they may hold interpretations of Islam that promise liberatory rights for women (also see Haddad 1984, 158-9; Ahmed 1992, 226 *ff.*; Stowasser 1993, 24-5; Watson 1994).[8] The girls I spoke to, those covered and not, mentioned to me that they frequently discussed the tenets of Islam amongst themselves. A few mentioned reading the Qur'an to discover "what's in it". Some of the girls told me that their parents didn't really know about Islam, they didn't pray or were just beginning to, and what they had taught them about Islam in the US had been "wrong". They were also not confident that relatives in the West Bank knew anything more about Islam than "tradition" (also see Hessini 1994). In the absence of resources,

[8] Some literature indicates that women who see themselves as "militants" of Islam (e.g. Zeinab al-Ghazali, the founder of Egypt's Muslim Women's Association) prioritise the "struggle" over their domestic obligations (Ahmed 1992, 196-202, Stowasser 1993, 24-5).

other than their religion classes at school and their religion teachers whom they were often too intimidated by to ask questions of, the girls seemed to teach themselves and each other about Islam (*cf.* Lowe 1991).

The final point I want to make is about covering as a marker of an intermediate stage of maturity, a pseudo-adulthood for girls. Conventionally, the *mandil* is not only a marker of piety, but also of sexual maturity (i.e. regular incidence of menstruation and development of secondary sexual features), the final stage of puberty, which for most girls happens by the time of their early adolescence. Yet a glance through the Friends School yearbook pictures clearly indicates that the majority of girls who wear the *mandil* are in their junior or senior years, in their middle or late adolescence. In other words, there is a gap between the time when girls become recognised as sexually mature beings, and when they seem to adopt the *hijab*. While I am not here trying to suggest that sexual maturity is merely a matter of biology, if we for a moment adopt the dominant discourse in the West Bank about the *hijab*, that girls must cover their beauty to protect them from male sexual attraction, then we are dealing only with the covering of mature feminine physical appearances and features. However, it seemed to me that the decision to cover was also associated with other issues, such as the desire to prevent marriage or to secure access to post-secondary education. For instance, Alia told me that she began to wear the *jilbab* in anticipation of enrolling in university later that year. The female student body on the Birzeit University campus seems to be swathed in the white *mandil* and the dark *jilbab* (also see el-Guindi 1981; MacLeod 1991). Alia's friends commented on how elegant she looked in her *jilbab*, and there was much discussion amongst the girls who covered about what types of dress "went" with the *mandil*. The consensus seemed to be that jeans and long-tailed shirts were, although common, not the preferred look. Instead, girls aspired to a more mature and grown-up style, preferring tailored clothing (or the *jilbab*). For Palestinian girls who grew up in the US, completion of high school also marked the beginning of young adulthood. Yet in Palestine, female adulthood is only achieved through marriage. By deciding to cover, I believe that these girls were claiming an adult status in lieu of marriage or in the interim between their present state of "girlhood" and adult wifehood. Indeed, as I have argued above, girls who covered seemed also to claim many of the rights associated with female adulthood in the US: choice of the timing of and partners to their marriages (although not unrestricted choice of who to marry); autonomy over their bodies and their sexual dignity (although not freedom of sexual behaviour and preference); engagement in post-secondary education and careers.

From the points raised in this discussion it is obvious that the decision to cover is a complex and difficult one. Covering not only touches on issues of identity, agency, and adulthood, but also of social comportment, class, and marriageability. Nonetheless, covering is a "technology" and a performance of gender and identity that at least some American-Palestinian girls seem to partly

school each other in. The following two case studies of Cindy's and Alia's decisions to cover touch on some of these issues. More importantly, they illustrate the weave of considerations and context that girls negotiate when making their decisions to cover or to refrain from doing so.

***The strategic utility of covering: Cindy's and Alia's stories***

Cindy began to cover two years before I interviewed her. This decision coincided with a visit from her mother, who, with her father, was resident in the US. Cindy and her older sister lived with their paternal aunt. Her mother, who also covers, wanted Cindy to cover, but also was careful to discover if Cindy understood the implications and was "ready", asking, "Are you sure? Are you sure? You know, once you put it on you can't take it off." Cindy said of her decision, "No one forced me or pressured me."

Cindy related to me:

> I was feeling guilty because I wasn't wearing it. You hear in *din* class what happens to girls who don't wear it....Since I came to this country I always wanted to wear it and when she [her mother] came, she asked me, "Do you want to wear it?"....My friends [who were also covered] were really encouraging too. The ones that don't wear it were, "Wait 'till you're married."

Cindy's case provides some illumination on the issues and conflicts one must work out when deciding to wear the *mandil*:

> My mom was happy, my dad was happy, [but] my aunt said, "After you get married it's better." I think she wanted me to show my hair, fix myself up or something.

Then:

> Most people, they say, "Wait 'till you get married" because they want to have fun. But I think it's the other way around. I think you can have fun with it on, and at the same time you're obeying your religion. Something inside of you isn't bothering you because you're not wearing it. Those people who say "wait" want to show themselves....Most of them think that if they're wearing it they won't get married. But I think that's wrong because I don't want a guy who's going to marry you for your hair, but for your mind....When you get engaged you can take it off [in front of your fiancé] as long as he says "yes" and you say "yes"....Some parents think that girls should have freedom to not wear *mandil* and to put their hair out....They want their daughters to get married....they're probably afraid they won't get married if they don't have their hair out....I know one lady who says, "Let her have fun." What, she's going to have fun with her hair?

Cindy is interesting because at first glance she seems to be representative of the "typical" girl who was terrified by her religion class into wearing the *mandil*, reinforced by "encouragement" from her parents, all the while claiming her decision as entirely her own. I decided to probe into Cindy's

statements on her decision to wear the *mandil* more closely because during our interviews she offered some of the most unabashed and articulate criticisms of the sexual double standard she saw at work in the West Bank. I found it difficult to believe that she would assume the *hijab* in such a simple manner. The context of her story increases the complexity of the train of events.

During our discussions Cindy emphasised to me how painful the family separation had been for her, and how she had felt "unloved" by her parents when first relocated to the West Bank. So, aside from scary *din* class, Cindy also wanted to be with her parents. If she "protected" herself with the *mandil*, then there would be no reason for her parents to "protect" her by keeping her in the West Bank. Notice that her decision coincided with a visit from her mother, and that both of her parents were "happy" with her decision. In effect, I wonder if Cindy was demonstrating that she was sufficiently "knowledgeable" about "the religion" to be taken home to the US with her mother.

The second thing we notice is that Cindy's aunt disagreed with her decision to cover, saying that it would be better if she waited until after marriage. This, as I have already noted, is a common sentiment, and I will later discuss how other families reacted similarly when their daughters began to cover or raised the issue. However, the scorn with which Cindy imbued the throw-away line, "I think she wanted me to show my hair, fix myself up or something" suggested to me that this was an issue over which there had already been some engagement and struggle between Cindy and her aunt. Indeed, when I later talked to a teacher at Cindy's school, she revealed to me that early marriage was a "problem" with their female students. During our conversations Cindy herself raised the issue of early marriage and was extremely critical of its incidence. Cindy had ambitions to study at university, which marriage quite likely would have put a damper on.

Finally, we come to Cindy's statement, "Most of them think that if they're wearing it they won't get married. But I think that's wrong because I don't want a guy who's going to marry you for your hair, but for your mind." Here is a criticism of the standard of evaluation of unmarried girls she saw at work in the West Bank. By wearing the *mandil* she was explicitly rejecting any suitor who desired her for superficial physical reasons, preferring to be chosen for her "mind", an idiom for her selfhood. This critical perspective on the valuation of girls based on their beauty is reminiscent of western feminist ideas about women's and girls' worth, and seemed to be consistent with her other critiques of the double standard applied to girls and boys in the West Bank.

Alia's story also illustrates some of these issues. Alia moved to the West Bank with her parents and her brother for her senior year of high school. When she left the US she told her American, non-Arab, non-Muslim boyfriend not to worry, that their separation would only be for a year. They were writing to each other during the course of our meetings, and were still in love. Alia said that

she worried a lot about the prospect of marriage because she felt that she and her boyfriend were meant for each other. But he wasn't a Muslim, and what if men in the West Bank began making offers? Her own mother's and maternal grandmother's actions and comments also worried her. As we saw in chapter four, although Alia repeatedly asked for contact lenses in the US, it wasn't until a few months before returning to the West Bank that she was granted her wish. Her mother finally wanted her to get them so that "people wouldn't think that there was something wrong with [her] eyes". Alia explained that if there is something physically "wrong" with a girl it's difficult to marry her off in the West Bank. Her mother, she said, was excited about the prospect of Alia getting married, and her maternal grandmother was always telling Alia to wear tighter, more revealing clothes when she went out in order to attract attention and possible marriage prospects.

Alia told me that one day she argued with her mother over the marriage issue. She said that she made it clear that she didn't want to marry anyone who had his mother ask for or about her, or whose mother had "found" her, she didn't want someone to marry her for her passport, and continued to pile up conditions until her mother was pushed to respond to her, "Well, who's left?" After a few months of implicit pressure to consider the prospect of marriage in the West Bank Alia began wearing the *mandil.*

Alia mostly met with discouragement from her family over her new decision. Her mother warned her, disapprovingly, that she wouldn't "be able to wear any of your nice clothes anymore". Alia said that besides religious conviction, one of the contributing factors to her decision to cover was the incidence of their next door neighbour persistently "looking" and "staring" at her. Her father was not pleased with this, and neither was she. Within six months Alia began wearing the*jilbab.* She told me that this was in preparation for attendance at university the following year.

Alia also claimed that she put on the*mandil* and *jilbab* to prevent sexual comments from men and to prevent them from being able to "see" her: "I don't care if they see this [gesturing to her*jilbab*]." She said that she wrote to her boyfriend when she was trying to make her decision to cover, outlining all her reasons for wanting to, and he wrote back, "Please wear it." There was an element in all of this, according to Alia, of saving herself for her boyfriend in the US.

Although Alia was aware of the local wisdom that claimed that the*hijab* and *jilbab* attract men who want a religious (read: obedient and meek) wife, Alia rejected becoming engaged to this sort of man. At the same time, reminding me of Cindy, she did not want a man who was only attracted to her because of the way she looked. By rejecting these two large categories of men, Alia was rejecting most of the hopeful suitors who might come knocking on her father's door in the same way she rejected other categories of men in her earlier discussion with her mother.

Cindy's and Alia's stories offer two examples of how the girls' decisions to wear the *mandil* can be read. On the surface, Cindy seemed to bear out the usual stereotypes of young girls who cover. However, closer examination reveals themes of desire to return to the US, marriage avoidance, and a resistance to sexist valuation of girls and women. Alia's story contains many of the elements involved in girls' decisions to cover: sexual harassment or intrusive sexual attention, desire to return to the US, religious conviction, and marriage delay. Of course, Alia's *mandil* was also rather more unconventionally linked to her romance with a non-Muslim boy, highlighting its strategic utility. Once both stories are contextualised we begin to see how wearing the *mandil* can be a strategic act that carries with it meanings that seem inconsistent with the actual surface practice, at least in terms of mainstream definitions of the *hijab*.

### University education and struggles over adulthood and return

Graduation from high school in North America, as I have already mentioned, marks the transition from teenagerhood to adulthood, socially if not also economically. For many young North Americans the initiation into adulthood is passed through attendance at university or college, and many of the girls I spoke to shared this version of achievement of mature status. Wrapped up in this are imaginings of university lifestyle, including imaginings of self and social exploration and university as a testing ground and preparation for their final adult path. Needless to say, this version of achievement and definition of adulthood was rarely shared by American-Palestinian girls' parents and their surrounding West Bank village communities where marriage is the marker of feminine adulthood and the logical next step after high school graduation. The girls I spoke to were often caught up in the contradictions between these two sets of expectations and pathways to adulthood. Almost all of the girls did not believe they were ready for marriage directly after high school, and desired an interlude and a terrain on which they could experiment with how to be adult women without the constraints and commitments they believed marriage held in store for them. But they also believed that only attendance at an American university would provide the context that would allow them this experimentation. A university education was also a means to a career, something almost all of the girls expressed a wish for. However, university and vocational choices were also constrained by gender expectations, and as I will explain, choice of vocation was also shaped by ideas of what is acceptable girls' and women's work. Finally, a university education in the US was also a means of return.

In this section I will first discuss how Palestinian-American girls resident in the US negotiated university attendance with their parents. Like their cohorts resident in the West Bank, university provides Palestinian-American girls in the US one of the only legitimate means of delaying marriage. I will then discuss the particularities involved in the issue of university education for

Palestinian-American girls in the West Bank before turning to a case study that captures the dynamics involved in securing access to North American post-secondary education.

In the US, Cainkar (1988, 1991, 1994) reports that Palestinian-American girls' conflicted sense of identity is sometimes resolved when attending university, a move that for some parents is problematic. Although Palestinian-American parents believe in the value of education for their daughters, they are also deeply concerned about their daughters' sexuality and virginity and "tend to want their daughters married shortly after high school....[a move which is motivated by] fears generated by the greater sexual freedoms women have in U.S. society and the preponderance of premarital sex" (Cainkar 1994, 99), and "parents feared that they would lose control over their daughters (and their honor) should they attend college or take on employment" (1991, 295). When they are permitted to attend university, more than likely it is at a nearby school where living in their parents' homes is possible (Cainkar 1991, 296).[9]

Nonetheless, it is in university that many young Muslim Palestinian-American women finally begin to come to terms with being both Palestinian and American. Not only do they begin to experience more freedom of movement, but they are also exposed to university courses on Middle Eastern history, politics, and society, Islam, and Arabic, and to political action and social clubs for Muslim and Arab students. For the first time, often, they have an opportunity to learn more about their Arab heritage than the array of restrictive social practices they have come to associate with being Palestinian and Muslim. Most importantly, they meet peers with the same experience of being both Arab, Palestinian, or Muslim, and American (Cainkar 1991, 296-8; Daoud 1989).[10] At the same time, they also meet foreign-born Palestinian and Arab students. This experience of this meeting is a mixed one, as many Palestinian-American women come to realize that just as they do not wholly fit within "American" society, nor do they entirely fit within "Palestinian" or "Arab" society (Cainkar 1991, 298). While Palestinian-American women are the most active in American Arab and Muslim cultural and social clubs and organizations, American-born/raised Palestinian men are least active. As Cainkar (1991, 299) explains, "the males have been allowed to be American, and they have tended to blend into American society....[thus] they have been less likely to develop the pressing need to come to terms with a

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[9] Cainkar (1991, 296) mentions only one girl she knows of who rebelled against her father's wishes for her to marry and who ran away from home and went to college. She was "hunted and threatened" by male members of her family for "a number of years" but managed to finish university and establish herself in a career. Completely disowned by her family, she took on an "American" identity and married and "American" man.

[10] This finding is interesting given that it is the latest first generation that has the benefit of a network of mosques and community centres to which earlier generations of immigrants and their descendants did not have access (Abu-Laban 1991, 25). It is ironic that the non-Arab and non-Muslim institution of the American university provides the necessary tools to this generation for positive identity construction as Muslim Palestinian-Americans.

mixed identity or a feeling of marginality...[and so] have not sought out Palestinian organizations".

In the US, education is also related to marriage and marriageability. Many women follow their parents' wishes and marry after high school, but with the agreement from their spouses that they can continue with higher education. However, many also find that motherhood and housework intervene to make completion of their degrees impossible (Cainkar 1994, 99). On the other hand, pursuit of a university education is a "graceful" way to avoid early marriage, whereas sitting at home unemployed and not studying is interpreted as waiting for marriage proposals. If a girl is not engaged "within a reasonable period" then questions are raised in the community regarding her desirability, with all the associated and damaging gossip (Cainkar 1991, 294-5). Additionally, it is sometimes thought that a university education will enable their daughters to attract better husbands, as well as provide an insurance policy that will enable their daughters to make a living for themselves and their families if need be (Cainkar 1991, 93-4).

Every girl but one who I spoke to either had a university education or aspired to it--in the US. The one exception, Nadia, a survivor of the American urban gang scene, had no desire to continue with her education after high school, preferring instead the future prospect of becoming engaged to a local Palestinian. I was struck by how closely correlated were the girls' desires to go to university with their desires to go back to the US. In fact, none of the senior year high school girls I spoke to wanted to attend a Palestinian university as their first choice. I began to look upon this desire to continue with university education as a cloaked expression of desire to return to the US. Lana was quite explicit about her motivations, telling me that although 'I hate studying, I hate it", she wanted to continue her education in an American university. If offered the Birzeit University option she said that she preferred not to go at all.

I also began to understand that the girls felt they jeopardised their chances of returning to the US if they explicitly expressed this desire to return. In their parents' eyes, and in the eyes of their immediate Palestinian community, to desire return to the US meant identification with being American. One of the few legitimate ways the girls could express desire to return to the US was to shroud it in an expressed wish to gain a university degree. For instance, Dina excelled in high school, and her teachers all recommended to her parents that she seek further education in the US, but her father opposed this idea. Dina herself wanted to return to the US for her education and she had her mother's support for this plan. Despite this, and the fact that her father lived in the US for much of the year attending to his business, Dina's father did not want her to return to the US for fear that she would never return to Palestine. She could do nothing to convince her father otherwise, despite her protestations that she wanted to return after attaining her university degree. However, after her first semester at Birzeit her father was persuaded that the university did not offer

Dina the educational opportunities she deserved and finally agreed to allow her to return to the US for university. She was to return the following year, along with her younger brother who was going to complete his senior high school year in the States. When I asked her if she still wanted to return to the West Bank after receiving her degree, she replied,

> I have no idea how I'm going to feel about coming back here in the future. I mean for almost four years now, I've been trying to get back to the US, now that I'm probably going, I'm scared of going.

While she was feeling secure in her father's permission to return to the US for university, she was not telling her father that she wanted to study marketing there. She was afraid that he would tell her that she could study marketing at Birzeit in their English-language Business Department and refuse to allow her to leave after all. Dina had convinced her father that Birzeit was not appropriate for her because most of its classes and programs are only offered in Arabic. Therefore, it could not provide her with the range of opportunities or study options that an American university could offer. Dina's father, proud of his daughter and fully aware of her potential, was won over by this argument, which was augmented by the fact that her brother was due to return the same year. I might add here that one of the reasons Dina's bid to return to the US for her education was successful was because she demonstrated to her father that she was willing to give Birzeit "a chance". She did not appear to be in a rush to return to the US. And fortuitously, her brother was returning the same year she was proposing her move back to the US.

While the girls I spoke to were almost all unsuccessful in their bids to return to the US for their university education, their brothers were all encouraged to return for their degree studies, and even for their final year of high school. As Dina explained about her brother's situation, "They learned from my experience." She was referring to the fact that completing high school outside of the US is a disadvantage when it comes to meeting university scholarships and applications deadlines.

Before returning to the West Bank for her senior high school year, Alia claimed that her father had given her to understand that she could pursue any type of post-secondary education she chose. But after their relocation to the West Bank he began asserting that that Birzeit was good enough for her. She confronted her father on this, and also pointed out that although her older brother was in the US attending university, it was she who had been the good one with the good grades, who had never given him cause for concern. Why did she have to stay in the West Bank? She didn't understand, she said. Alia's father's response to her was, "But what is there to understand? Alia, I thought you knew that you were different. [Your brother] is different." Alia said to me that "it felt like arguing with a brick wall."

Indeed, the girls proved to be an anomaly in the West Bank, although their expectations of access to post-secondary education were consistent with their socio-economic class position in the US. Fewer than 5% of West Bank village girls age eighteen and over attend school (PCBS 1996a, 44; PCBS 1996b, 48). In the Ramallah-el-Bireh area over one-fifth of girls and women (including urban females) between the ages of 20-24 claim more than thirteen years of schooling, compared to only 13% of all West Bank village girls and women between the ages of 20-24 (PCBS 1996a, 43; PCBS 1996b, 71). Under 2% of West Bank village girls and women between the ages of 20-24 claim to have a BA or higher, a rate that is half what their city counterparts claim (PCBS 1996b, 84).

Several of the girls spoke about university as a route to becoming the kinds of women they wanted to be, and a good number of them had mothers who they modelled themselves after in this regard. Four of the girls had mothers who engaged in paid professional or skilled jobs outside of the home and family business in the US, and three of them had mothers who were educated to a higher level than their fathers (one had a graduate degree, one a BA, and another some university and a college diploma). Here I recall Linda's mother, mentioned in chapter two, who fought to attend university and acquire her degree. According to her daughter, it afforded her much pleasure to fantasise herself as someone important, someone accomplished, a professional. Other girls also saw themselves as future career women, able to earn their own income and independence, and knew that the achievement of this version of themselves was contingent on their completion of a degree. Some saw university or other forms of post-secondary education as a means to self-fulfilment. Alia told me that she and her mother had always dreamed that she would go to art school and become a great artist. Finally, many of the girls, and this was consistent with their yearnings for return to the US, saw in university a means to living a "normal" life. Dina speculated that the following year she would have relative freedom to socialise and live a "normal student life". Lana wanted to go to a university outside of the city where her father's business was located and where he lived most of the year: "I want to go to college, I want to be like everyone else, but I won't be able to [if I attend university] in [her hometown]." Indeed, her mother's objections to Lana moving back to the US stemmed from concerns about the social enticements associated with American university life, particularly mixed-sex socialising. She was also worried that Lana would try to deploy her adult status in the US, as a young woman over eighteen years of age, to leverage more social freedom. But Lana said, "I'm not going to go out and do anything bad."

Certainly it was not a "normal" student life that awaited them at Birzeit University. Well known for its activist student body during and since the *intifada*, Birzeit students are in the thick of Palestinian politics, frequently staging demonstrations and strikes, on and off campus. They were amongst the first groups of demonstrators at the Ramallah checkpoint in September 1996, activity which sparked

the spread of demonstrations and violent clashes from Jerusalem to throughout the West Bank and Gaza over the Israeli opening of the Hasmonean tunnel under the *Haram el-Sharif* mosque compound. But engagement in Birzeit student political life is not available to American-Palestinian female students on campus. Dina felt cut off from the social, political, and even the administrative life of the university as all notices and activities are posted in Arabic and "it's just too much work to deal with it all the time." Dina, who had a highly developed political sense, wasn't politically involved at Birzeit. I asked her if this was because she was perceived as "American" and thus wouldn't be accepted on a political basis. Her response was, "Well, there is that, but it's mainly because I'm a girl [that she wouldn't be accepted as a political actor]." Also, there is the language issue, where all discussions, speeches, and debates are held in Arabic. Discrimination against American-Palestinian students did exist among the local Palestinian student body. Up until the spring 1996 student elections at Birzeit, American-Palestinian (English-speaking) students weren't allowed to vote. The American-Palestinian population at Birzeit is tiny in comparison to the local student population, and the American-Palestinians formed a close, tight-knit group. This was both a social comfort as well as social behaviour that increased their isolation on campus and maintained the ghettoisation of their issues. Several American-Palestinian students, almost all boys, from Dina's year quit Birzeit to go to universities in the US.

Sometimes the girls had to tailor their professional ambitions to what was gender-appropriate in Palestinian village terms. Certain professions are not acceptable for women to pursue, especially if they require serving the public or working with men (also see Heiberg, Øvensen 1994, 210, 305-6; UNDP 1994; Cainkar 1996). For example, Ally's first dream was to be a lawyer, but she was concerned that her father would not permit her go to university for the amount of time required to acquire a degree and pass bar exams. Even if she did convince her father to allow her go to university, she said, her brother would change her father's mind. "A girl's for marriage" was her brother's attitude, she said. And in law she would have to work with men, "and my dad wouldn't like that." Instead, Ally thought that she might go to "beauty college" in the US the next year.

As Ally's situation points out, post-secondary education for girls is still a contested right in some Palestinian families. What's the point when a girl is going to marry, anyhow? Khadija noted a difference between her mother's family's attitude towards post-secondary education for her and the attitude of her father's family. Khadija's mother's family members were very supportive of education for daughters, and they always asked her what she was going to do after she graduated from high school, but her father's family thought that she should get married after high school. Nancy, who acquired her degree in the US before relocating to the West Bank with her family, reported that her mother faced criticism from her father's family when she supported her daughters' attendance at university.

However, as Cainkar (1991) found in the US, university education provided the only legitimate means to delaying marriage. Every girl I spoke to had anxieties about marriage, as we will see in the following section, and the senior high school girls (except Nadia) preferred engagement to be a distant event, with marriage only taking place after the achievement of their university degrees. They were uncertain about the possibility of continuing university after marriage, unsure that their future fiancés or their families would permit their post-secondary education, and aware that the demands of childcare (which surely must shortly follow marriage) would impede their ability to study even if allowed to do so. Alia said that she didn't want to get married until after she finished her degree. She wanted "the whole package" of university (here again are resonances of living a "normal" young adult American lifestyle) and felt that being married would interfere with that, even if she married someone who supported her education. Nonetheless, some of the girls had full support to pursue their educations, even while married, as I will discuss with Linda below, and as Aisha wrote: "My parents definitely support my continuing my education after my marriage, it's something they made sure [my fiancé] knew even before they considered it [his request to marry Aisha]."

Education was also a terrain upon which contestations of "return" to the West Bank and issues of masculinity and femininity were played. When Khadija was told by her parents about their move to the West Bank for her final year of high school, she immediately went on "strike" at school. To her and her parents' knowledge, there was only one school available to Khadija in the West Bank--the prestigious Friends School in Ramallah, which has entrance restrictions based on academic achievement. Always a straight-"A" student in the US, Khadija attempted to foil her parents' plans to settle in Palestine permanently by refusing to study or do homework in a deliberate strategy to compromise her grades. Her plan was successful insofar as her grades plummeted. But the plan was fruitless. Her family moved despite her poor grades, and by the time they had relocated, several private schools had come into operation to educate English-speaking students. The final consequence was that her grades were so poor, and her family connections insufficient, that she was unable to enrol at Friends, and was forced to make do with one of the other schools, all of which reputedly offered a poor standard of education.

The final insult in Khadija's eyes lay in her father telling her that because her grades weren't very good she lost her chance to return to the US for university. Not only was the high school she was attending poorly equipped to prepare her for SAT examinations and a future university curriculum, Khadija also found that boredom and depression compromised her ability to work at school. Her remaining option was Birzeit.

The latter part of Khadija's story resonates with Dina's, whose father told her during her first year at Birzeit that if she had won a scholarship to go to the US for university he would have allowed her

go in her first year. But during her final year at high school, because of her father's discouraging attitude (he had then told her that he would not permit her to return to the US for university), Dina neglected to apply for US universities and university funding. I asked her if she was angry with him when he blamed her for not securing a US scholarship, but she said, "No (laughing). He's my dad. I can't be angry at my father. We're Arab!...But yes, I was angry."

Finally, although Laila's grades had slipped the last years she lived in the US, upon her arrival in Palestine she thought through her options and realized that the only legitimate means to return to the US was through a claim to university education (the other was marriage--a distinctly unpalatable alternative to her). School took on a primary importance in her life, and she studied her way to the top of her class. She realized that if she was ever to return to the US it would be dependent on an American university acceptance. Her academic performance continued to be excellent in grade twelve. However, by the beginning of her grade twelve year she had been told by her parents that they would not support her to go back to the US for university the following year. While it was important to her parents that Laila get a university education, it was not imperative that the degree she gained had any academic or professional utility. A degree was a status marker that qualified her for marriage into a good family or to one of her western-educated cousins. In this context, her father was able to say, "An education isn't everything" while insisting that she attend a local university.

Laila herself was furious over what she perceived to be her father's cavalier attitude, and even macho posturing, towards her education. She angrily related to me how the father of a gifted classmate had come to her house to visit her father. He wanted to discuss with Laila's father the prospect of his own daughter's return to the US for her university education. However, according to Laila, her father talked her classmate's father out of this possibility. Laila scathingly mimicked the two fathers, putting on an exaggerated, gloating Arabic accent: "Heh, heh. *We're* not sending *our* daughters to America."

What was going on here? I suspect that these fathers were struggling with their own fantasies of themselves. On the one hand, being a successful Arab man and father was contingent on the control of their daughters' sexualities, symbolised and practically realised by their relocation of the girls to the West Bank. On the other hand, their fathers both came of age at the height of Arab nationalism, which among other things, valued women's education as a measure of modernity. These men held modern versions of themselves, articulated also with the positive images of Americanness that both Americans and Palestinians hold: sophisticated, cosmopolitan, progressive, and a place where women can be strong and equal to men (this is valued both positively and negatively by Palestinians and Middle Easterners). Genuinely concerned for their daughters' welfare, Khadija's and Dina's fathers were caught between two contradictory positions. The easiest way to resolve this tension

was to displace it onto their daughters, making them responsible for their failure to secure a university education for themselves. Laila's father more overtly placed the burden of his masculinity on his daughter's back, and her overheard snippet of conversation reminds me of Joseph's (1993b, 469) observation about men in Camp Trad who

> did not deny relationality but valorized it, glorying in their personal relationships in public and private spheres. Masculine glorification of relationality, however, was buttressed by the empowerment patriarchal relationality offered them. For although boys were subject to senior women and men, they grew up to be senior men with the attendant privileges.

Laila herself speculated about this and other examples of her father's behaviour towards her in the West Bank:

> I don't know why he's like this. He never used to be this way in the States. He used to sit us down and talk to us rationally. I don't know if it's the society, or his family, or that he can't find a job. I think it's a combination of all of them.

All three of the fathers were able to keep their daughters in the West Bank, safeguarding their own masculinities, and while Khadija's and Dina's fathers were at the same time able to profess a self that was in tune with more modern versions of masculinity and enlightened fatherhood, Laila's father seemed to more overtly enjoy his rights to subordinate his daughter to prove his own manhood.

In this section I have referred to daughters' efforts at "convincing" their parent to allow them to return to the US for university. The girls took several measures, including attaining a high level of academic achievement, passing their SAT tests with good scores, and sometimes even applying to American schools and scholarships. They also worked at demonstrating their capacity to maintain their reputations. In the following case study I will discuss how one girl decided to cover as a means of convincing her father to allow her to return to Canada for her university education, and how covering then allowed her to invest in a version of herself that was independent, strong, and mature.

### *The terms and trade-offs of university education: Sara's story*

I met Sara just a few months after her move to the West Bank. Sara was a "prickly" girl, and in this way she was unlike any of the other girls I spoke to. Cagey, and even at times nervous, I got the sense that Sara felt she was treading some very thin lines. At our first meeting I asked Sara why she didn't cover. She was clearly uncomfortable with the question, and replied,

> My father wants me to [wear the *mandil*]. I don't know if I really like it. I don't know....I'd rather let the time come....I know I should. I have no idea why I don't want to...

She was clearly angry about the issue and made it clear that she didn't want to discuss it, and so I dropped the matter. We also discussed school. She was aiming for a 94% average the year we spoke (the previous year she had achieved an overall 90%), and felt that if she could prove herself to her father, it would "convince" him to send her back to Canada for university. Though she hadn't yet spoken with him directly about university, she had gained her mother's support. But then her story shifted slightly, and she said that she had spoken to him about the issue, but he hadn't said "yes" or "no", just "We'll have to see in the future." In spite of this, Sara said, "I'm pretty sure my dad will let me go back for university....I want to be a pharmacist....I can live with my aunt and uncle in [Canada]." Sara said that she used to want to be an engineer, but because she wasn't sure it would be accepted in Palestine, she decided on pharmacy instead: "It'll work in this country....it's more of a girl's job." Since she had earlier said that she wanted to move back to Canada to live, I asked her what did it matter whether she studied engineering or pharmacy? At this, Sara immediately closed off and said, shortly, "No, I've decided on pharmacy now, that's it."

By the time I saw Sara again, about a month later, she was wearing the *mandil*. Surprised, I asked her what had led her to take this decision:

> My father left and he really wanted me to wear it before he left....I wanted to let him know I wouldn't do anything to bring him down [ruin her reputation]....I knew there was a day when I was going to have to do it....My mom was, "Sooner or later you're going to put it on and I can assure you, once you do, everything will go your way." And it has. Now he [her father] lets me do whatever I want.

She had also asked her father directly about university in Canada and he had agreed. She had received permission from him just a couple of weeks after our first meeting, and then, just before he returned to Canada for work, she began to cover, in part she said, as a reassurance to him.

She was excited about the prospect of her new life at university:

> I'm planning to go back [to Canada] and really fix myself up [new clothes, a more mature image]....I want to start college as a big step in life....when I make a big start in life I like to change things from head to toe....[it's about] being who I want to be, but I couldn't do that in high school.

In reading Sara's story, it is difficult not to draw the conclusion that her adoption of the *mandil* was a means to an end. Indeed, Sara was the only girl I spoke to that covered who did not attribute her decision to her own sense of piety. Not, I am sure, that she would deny wearing it out of religiosity (although I dared not question her directly on this), but she herself never made any reference to Islam or Allah in her discussion with me about her decision.

At our first meeting she was on tenterhooks about the prospect of returning to Canada for university. Only a few months in the West Bank, Sara saw her stay in Palestine as strictly temporary, and was gambling on returning to Canada for her university education. After securing an agreement from her father before he left, she, in effect, "sealed the bargain" by covering.

Embedded in her narrative are other issues relating to return to Canada, post-secondary education for girls, and appropriate careers for girls. When Sara told me that she had decided to study pharmacy instead of engineering because it's a "girl's job" and would be better accepted in Palestine it seemed to contradict her stated desire to live in Canada after completing high school. However, Sara was contending with the need to present an ambition that was acceptable for her family and their immediate Palestinian community. In a context where post-secondary education and professional careers for girls and women are still rarities (here I am speaking of the West Bank village, not Palestine or Palestinians as a group), and their acceptability governed by impressions of gendered appropriateness, Sara was under considerable pressure to tailor and prioritise her desires accordingly. Thus, the switch to pharmacy. Further, from Sara's words I think we can safely gather that her parents and family were not privy to her desire to return to Canada permanently. This makes her switch to a career option that would "work in this country" intelligible.

As a Canadian, Sara's original decision to study engineering reverberates with issues made prominent by the country's feminist community. On 6 December 1989, Marc Lepine walked into l'Ecole Polytechnique d'Universite de Montreal with a gun, ordered the male students to separate from the female students, and muttered "fucking feminists" before proceeding to shoot and kill fourteen women engineering students. He then shot himself. From writings found in his room it was clear that he blamed women students for his own failure to study engineering. Each year since this tragedy, the "Montreal Massacre" has been commemorated by the media and feminist organizations across Canada, and women in the sciences, particularly engineering, have made a concerted effort to encourage girls and young women to enter these fields of study and work (Olson 1992). This ugly incident, and several cases in the years after it of women murdered by male partners with whom they had broken relationships, had a dramatic impact on the terms of the debate about women's safety and women's access to public life and resources in Canada. I can only wonder if Sara was aware of the "Montreal Massacre" and if she accepted the implications and challenges that Canadian feminists say it represents. While it is sheer speculation on my part that Sara was aware of or influenced by the "Montreal Massacre" and the debates it spurred, it is also hard to believe that the very prominent and public debates surrounding this event and on feminist issues in 1990s Canada, or the discursive context which these debates shaped, escaped her as she was coming of age in Canada and beginning to define herself as a young woman. This might be further indicated by her initial visceral reactions against the prospect of wearing the*mandil.* Sara

told me that her own mother "isn't like other women here--she supports women's education", and her mother was also one of the few to work outside of the home in North America. Sara's initial decision to take up a profession heavily associated with the male sphere in Canada seems to take its point of departure from her mother's example and may have been fed by the feminist discursive climate of 1990s Canada.

Finally, after adopting the *mandil*, Sara was quite excited about the prospect of changing her "image". She wanted new clothing that would reflect her new, more mature status. She viewed the prospect of being a university student as a new and important epoch in her life, in which she could be "who I want to be", something she couldn't do while still a child in high school. For Sara, the *mandil* opened up the opportunity to go to university, and with this she foresaw the ability to perform as an adult and perhaps even independent woman.

Sara's story brings together many of the themes surrounding the terms of a university education for American-Palestinian girls, including the return to North America, gender-appropriate careers, fantasies about and roads to womanhood. The events and discourses that constituted her decision to cover, what to study, and what it means to cover and for a Canadian girl to study engineering, meant that Sara had to negotiate and juggle her own ambitions with her father's concerns about reputation and identity. Sara's mother, too, played a role in guiding Sara's consideration of her options. Always supportive of Sara's ambition to secure a university education, she also encouraged Sara to adopt the *mandil*, presenting the decision to cover as a type of or partial guarantee to attaining post-secondary education. In this respect, Sara's mother was schooling her daughter in the art of the bargain (*cf.* Kandiyoti 1988).

As I will discuss in the following section, issues relating to marriage made even more strenuous demands on American-Palestinian girls' abilities to accommodate their own desires with their parents' own investments. Frequently, as we have already seen, issues of covering, education, and marriage became intertwined. Yet unlike decisions of wearing the *mandil* and access to university education of their choice, when it came to marriage girls were subjected to pressures and expectations which they had less space to redefine. Whereas not everyone wears the *hijab* or gets a degree, almost all Palestinians get married, thus the meanings of marriage acts are more stubbornly resistant to American-Palestinian efforts at their redefinition. Instead, girls mostly seemed to use their power to refuse and to exploit to their fullest rights they have claim to in the engagement process. By so doing, the girls worked to create spaces for themselves that could accommodate their investments in autonomous womanhood that we have already seen them play out through covering and education.

## New versions of marriage

It was commonly assumed, both by the general Palestinian community and by American-Palestinian returnee girls themselves, that they had been brought to Palestine in order to be married off. Indeed, one girl I spoke to, Riham, brought herself to the West Bank, independently of her parents, in part to find a husband. For reasons drawn from Cainkar's (1991, 1994) research that I will discuss below, marriage to Muslim Palestinian men in the US is becoming increasingly difficult. Yet marriage in the West Bank is not a simple matter for American-Palestinian girls either. Problems of early marriage and being married for their US passports loomed as concerns for many of the girls. Even more commonly, however, the American-Palestinian girls I spoke to were juggling their desire to acquire university educations and return to the US with their parents' and families' desires for them to secure good marriages. Sometimes these agendas coincided, but just as often they were areas of conflict or negotiation between the girls, their parents, their prospective fiancés, and their families. Aside from these issues were fundamental anxieties over how to find compatible husbands given the girls' romantic expectations of marriage and future husbands and the constraints of the arranged marriage system, even if modified somewhat to accommodate preliminary meetings and the girls' right to agree or not to an engagement. If the girls wore the *mandil* this was an added complication, with the girls and their parents feeling that the *hijab* further decreased their chances of finding a suitable husband. I will open this section by discussing the marriage situation faced by Palestinian-American girls in the US before turning to an examination of how the girls I spoke to experienced and navigated their way through issues having to do with marriage in the West Bank.

The Palestinian-American women Cainkar interviewed were expected to marry Muslims, and Palestinian men who originated from the same village were preferable. In fact, the American offspring of Arab immigrants often also share these values themselves in terms of choice of future spouses. In a study of Arab-Canadian families, one young woman preferred to marry another Arab-Canadian like herself, believing that "they would have a common culture (Arab) and share common Canadian values" (Abu-Laban 1979, 139). Nonetheless, because of the difficulties in securing such husbands, Cainkar (1991, 300) reports that "nationality and locale preferences have been relaxed". For the women's part, traditional arranged marriage practices are unacceptable, and certain innovations and compromises have been adopted.

This adaptation of traditional marriage choice and method is apparently not consistent throughout the US. As one member of the Ramallah Youth Union in Westland, Michigan says,

> The concern of Palestinians to protect their identity, traditions and customs in [the] United States is very strong. We preserve the details of Palestinian marriage customs even more rigorously than at home (Ammar 1996, 8).

Another article discusses the American Federation of Ramallah and indicates that it was formed so that first generation Ramallan-Americans could meet each other and "continue the lineage" and that "[a] majority of young Ramallans still marries within the community" (Christison 1989, 30).[11] Finally, one girl complains in *"Benaat* Chicago":

> In our religion, you have to get married and they [men] get to pick the girl....and I feel like a little toy in K-Mart and I don't like that. I want to meet the guy (American Friends Service Committee 1996).

Cainkar (1991, 295) traces the rejection of arranged marriage to "[h]aving been raised in a culture in which romantic ideas about love were prized", rendering the women unwilling "to marry someone they did not care for and, in some cases, did not even know". As with the parents of the girls I interviewed, many or most of the parents of Cainkar's respondents had arranged marriages, often only vaguely knowing their future spouses at the time of engagement. Their daughters, however, insist on having some sort of relationship with their future husbands. Conflicts sometimes emerge between Arab immigrants to North America and their children over issues of marriage:

> An expression often heard from members of the second generation [Abu-Laban uses the term "second generation" to refer to first generations born in Canada of immigrants] when opposed by their parents, especially in matters of marriage and mate-selection, is "I am in a free country" (Abu-Laban 1979, 155).

Sometimes young Arab North Americans, both women and men, are able to choose each other from contacts made in Palestinian, Arab, or Muslim social or cultural clubs. In other instances men have approached parents to ask for their daughters, who are given a choice. If she agrees to an engagement, then they are permitted to carry on a brief and often chaperoned (or otherwise restricted by time and place) courtship before the engagement in order that they might get to know each other (Cainkar 1991, 305; Cainkar 1994, 94). Regardless of which method of choosing a husband, American-style dating is strictly out of the question:

> even if certain parents had been willing, in principle, to allow their daughter to see a suitor alone a number of times before she reached a decision, many other factors held them back. Should their daughter be seen in public with an eligible man, a scandal would ensue. Had they allowed her to see a suitor and then she decided against marrying him, they would have to be concerned over what the man would say to others....The process

[11] It must be noted here that Ramallah clubs and organisations in the US would be based on a Christian Palestinian membership as Ramallah was originally a Christian village. The first Muslim moved to Ramallah in 1923 (Shaheen 1982, 27).

> could not be repeated with another man without it appearing that the parents approved of dating (Cainkar 1991, 301).

Palestinian-American men, on the other hand, are usually free to date "American" women and frequently choose "American" spouses as an extension of this social activity and as a consequence of having little access to marriageable Palestinian-American women. In addition, some Palestinian-American men marry Palestinian women from their parents' village or from Jordan. In some circles, these women are preferable because of their status as "real" Palestinian women. Palestinian-American women are sometimes perceived by Palestinian-American men and by Palestinian-born men as either too "American" (too assertive and self-determined) or not "Palestinian" enough (especially in terms of language and "culture"), and therefore unable to transmit Palestinian culture to future children. Men frequently make the calculation that it is preferable to either marry a "real" American or a "real" Palestinian, but not someone who is neither. These factors all serve to limit the marriage pool for Palestinian-American women in the US who must marry Muslims, and preferably Palestinians (Abu-Laban 1979, 139; Abu-Laban 1991; Cainkar 1991, 302-5; Cainkar 1994, 100). While Cainkar makes no mention of this phenomenon, it is common knowledge in the Ramallah-el-Bireh area that the summer is "wedding season" when many Palestinian-American families bring their daughters back to Palestine to be "seen" (and hopefully chosen by eligible men and their families) at village and family weddings (Heiberg, Øvensen 1994, 286). Lana, one of the senior high school girls I interviewed, lamented the fact that she wasn't being "asked for", when many of her friends and acquaintances were already being sought out. "What's wrong with me?," she asked. Some of the problem lay in the fact Lana spent all of her summers in the US, and as a result wasn't being "seen" at the local weddings during the season.

In the Arab world, as I have already mentioned, girls become women, and thus adults, through the avenue of marriage. The girls I spoke to were well-aware of this significance of marriage. Sara said, "When you get married you change to your second life." And Nancy, a young professional, told me that she had proven to herself that she could look after herself, work, and bring home money. Marriage was the next thing to do, the final phase into adulthood. "Right now," said Nancy, "I'm waiting for the new chapter of my life to begin [marriage]."

However, married Palestinian female adulthood is not the same thing as American female adulthood. In the West Bank, unmarried girls go from being the responsibility of their fathers to becoming married women and thus the responsibility of their husbands.[12] Marriage continues to be based on the principles that define the arranged marriage, but some important modifications

have taken place since Hilma Granqvist (1931, 1935) first studied marriage in Artas village near Bethlehem in the 1920s when babies might be promised as brides almost immediately upon their birth. Before the dispossession and dislocation that characterized the events of 1948 for most Palestinians, marriage was linked to the preservation of property ownership and the building of power alliances. With the rise of wage labour as the main means of wealth creation, particularly after 1967, the importance of the link between marriage and property largely dissipated (Heiberg, Øvensen 1994, 286; Roffey, al-Kurd 1997, 8-9). As I indicated in chapter four, marriage, particularly for Palestinians in the US, and also perhaps for Palestinians in other parts of the diaspora, now derives its significance from its connection to the maintenance of Palestinian identity.

Both in the US and the West Bank, young Palestinians are bringing notions of romantic love to the institution of marriage. This, accompanied by the rise in education for girls and the ability of eligible young men to create their own wealth through wage labour independent of their fathers and families, has brought the innovation of choice to the system of arrangement. In some cases, young women and men will meet at university or at work and choose each other, as was the case with Riham's parents. Among a small group of young professional West Bank Palestinians, dating and mixed parties are common, and marriage processes resemble middle class western norms. Still a minority practice, middle class western-style "dating" is mostly restricted to couples from West Bank refugee camps and cities (Manasra 1993, 13-14).

The girls I spoke to had varying degrees of choice, ranging from absolute discretion over who they married and how they met, including full autonomy to engage in dating relationships, to more traditional patterns of engagement and marriage. Amal, who had the greatest measure of freedom, was a young professional and was determined that she and her future husband would choose each other through a process of developing an emotional and sexual relationship prior to engagement and marriage. With her parents' approval, she had started dating in high school in the US, and had only recently made the decision that she wanted to marry at all, although she still hadn't been successful in finding the right man.

Dina also expected that she could choose her own husband, likely through contacts at university:

> I used to *want* "the guy" to be from the same balad (it would make it a lot easier for me), but now I really don't care. I don't think it matters to my parents either. Anyway there aren't many "available" guys in my village. I don't think they [her parents] have to know him either, but they'll have to get to know him before any of us say yes or no. I'd prefer him to be Arab.

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[12] However, traditionally this formula becomes a bit complicated when taking into account the notion of family honour. In the Arab world, unlike the rest of the Middle East, after marriage women's honour remains within the realm of her natal family (Meeker 1976).

Dina's situation seems to be based on a mix of individual choice and corporate family decision-making once a possible candidate is selected ("before any of us" agree).

Sara explained that she will have lots of choice when it comes to marriage:

> With my parents they look at it [marriage] more the Canadian way....[they] will be open-minded about it....If I think he's right then they'll let me marry him....but if I think he's right but he's not, then they'll talk me out of it.

She was unclear about whether or not she would be able to actively choose her future husband, but at the same time maintained that she would have plenty of control over the choice. Of course, her parents had the ultimate veto, if only through their powers of persuasion.

However, most of the girls I spoke to expected only to have a choice about being chosen. Young men might still present their mothers and sisters with a "shopping list" of qualities they would like in a young bride, but they can also ask their female kin to investigate the possibilities of engagement with a girl of their choice. Girls are now commonly and seriously consulted about any prospect that may present himself.

Amal, while initially critical of this system, came to see the sense in it after discussing it with her male friends:

> At first when I used to hear these guys saying, "Oh, I'll just let my mother marry me off" I used to reject it. But they'd say to me, "What am I supposed to do? How am I supposed to find someone on my own? If I even go near a girl in my village I'll ruin her reputation. So I'll let my mother find someone for me. She knows what I like, what I want." And so, it began to make sense to me.

The girls had mixed reactions to this system. On the one hand, when I asked Lana how she felt about having to wait to be "chosen", she said, "I don't think it's fair. I hate it....but what am I going to do?" On the other hand, Cindy, who had lately been having suitors coming to her aunt's house to ask for her, was critical about the fact that boys get to "choose" while girls can only decide to be chosen. But she also said that when her aunt calls her father about the offers, he asks Cindy if she wants them or not: "That's what I like about my dad--he gives us the freedom to decide ourselves. We have a choice."

The legal age of marriage for girls in the West Bank is fifteen, but marriage below the age of eighteen is locally considered to be "early marriage" (Heiberg, Øvensen 1994, 288). Yet according to a recent UNICEF survey cited by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS), a full 20% of West Bank women between the ages of 15-19 are married; over half of the

20-24 age cohort are married, and in the age range 25-29 over 70% are married (PCBS 1994, 103). The statistics are almost identical in the case of women in the Ramallah-el-Bireh region (PCBS 1996a, 49). Three of the girls I interviewed were or had been engaged, one of these at age fifteen and another at age sixteen. I will discuss their cases individually below. Indeed, it was an issue that most of the girls were confronting, if only because of community or family pressure on them to become engaged. In their survey of adolescent girls between the ages of 13-16, Mirjam van Dorssen and Jamila Hussein found that village and refugee camp girls were already receiving marriage proposals and "thus were forced to think about the issue" (DCI/PS 1996, 24). And as I mentioned earlier, a teacher from one of the schools that caters to American-Palestinians told me that early marriage was "a problem" amongst their female students. Additionally, I heard from several girls and teachers that early marriage was sometimes forced on girls who broke the strictures on dating. On the whole, the girls I spoke to tended to frown upon early marriage, and none of them desired early marriage for themselves. Cindy was quite vocally opposed to the early marriage she saw happening in the West Bank:

> Most girls here get married at fifteen, sixteen, they don't know anything. I think that's wrong....Most girls who get married at the age of fifteen, sixteen get divorced very quickly. They are still babies [and] they don't know anything about life.

Sara suggested that sometimes girls opt for early marriage to leave bad home situations, but she didn't see it as a positive solution: "A bad life with your parents is better than a bad life with your husband....a husband is forever." As is implied by Sara's statement, divorce is relatively rare in Palestine, and unlike in the time of Granqvist's (1931, 1935) research, socially unacceptable. For instance, in a recent features article in a local newspaper, a mother of one divorced daughter whose husband collaborated with the Israelis for six years claimed, "I'd rather my daughter was married to a collaborator than be divorced" (Hamzeh-Muhaisen 1998b). However, in the last few years commentators have been noting a rise in the divorce rate, and some researchers, as Cindy suggested, link its incidence to early marriage ("Early marriage causes increase in divorce rate" 1995; Roffey, al-Kurd 1997). Others have been highlighting the health problems that can result from women becoming pregnant at young ages (Muhaisen 1997).

Reflecting community pressure to marry before one's mid-twenties, Lana was adamant about wanting to be married in the near future: "I definitely do not want to be unmarried at twenty-four--I want to be married by twenty....here marriage is such a big thing....We're not allowed to have boyfriends and I don't want to be single the rest of my life." Also couched in these remarks is perhaps the frustration of not being able to engage in what Lana defines as a "normal" social and sexual life, especially in terms of what is usual in the US. Three of the girls I spoke to, who were young women by North American standards, having completed their undergraduate degrees and at the time of our meetings holding down professional jobs, were at the outside cusp of the usual

marrying age for West Bank village women. Amal said that at first she used to experience indirect pressure whenever she went back to her parents' village to visit: "It used to come out whenever someone asked me how old I was, or what I was going to do [with my life] now." Nonetheless, Amal maintained, she didn't want to get married before she was twenty-eight. Nancy said that when she's in the US and with her friends there she doesn't even think about marriage and doesn't feel the least desire to get married, but when she's in Palestine she finds that she does. She suspected that it was the constant indirect pressure in the West Bank to get married that influenced her.

Despite pervasive community pressure, most of the younger girls wanted to complete their education before considering marriage. Many of them had their families' support, and in the cases of Aisha and Linda who were both engaged before starting post-secondary education, their families supported them in pursuing a university education after their weddings. But most of the girls said that they would prefer to become engaged after acquiring their degrees. Some of the girls cited the domestic workload that comes with marriage as an obstacle to completing a degree. There were also strategic considerations involved in the timing of acquiring a degree before marriage. Some girls and their parents felt that a degree would attract better marriage offers, and girls were also determined that they would not "just sit at home" after marriage and felt that a degree would guarantee them a professional career. Nonetheless, several of the girls indicated to me that while they wanted to focus their attention on university before considering marriage, and never envisioned themselves as married in their early twenties when resident in the US, they now felt that an engagement while in university would be desirable, reflecting the overwhelming pressure to marry in the West Bank. It often was not acceptable to clearly state a desire to defer marriage, and some girls seemed to feel that it was at least important to get their foot into the university door before getting married. For instance, Sara said to me,

> I'll say, "Yeah, I'm ready to get married now", but I'd really rather get a start on college....there's something that's down there that's not ready yet....I want to start at least my first year of college before I get married.

Although aspiring to a marriage based on romantic love, the girls realistically pointed out that, under the system of modified arrangement to which most of them were compelled to adhere, romantic love would have to develop after engagement--the time in the marriage process in which couples are allowed to see each other more freely, and in some cases unchaperoned. In fact, the period of engagement was seen as the stage during which couples would get to know each other. Engagement occurs at the signing of the marriage contract. In the strictest legal sense, according to Muslim *shari'a* law, this constitutes a marriage. Thus, if an engagement is broken, it is commonly referred to as a "divorce". Indeed, a Palestinian friend from a Ramallah-area village had broken an engagement several years before I knew her, but she was still referred

to as "the divorced one" by her fellow villagers. It is customary in the West Bank for there to be a gap in time between the formal engagement and the wedding ceremony, immediately after which the married couple consummate their marriage and begin living together. While the girls commonly reported that their own parents' engagement periods were short (i.e. a few weeks), and this is also indicated in the Friends School oral history projects referred to in chapter two and by Granqvist (1931, 1935), the three girls I spoke to who had fiancés were all undergoing long engagements by traditional standards, none less than a year in length. Cindy took quite an instrumentalist view toward engagement, telling me that when the time came she wanteda year-long engagement in order for her and her future fiancé to get to know one another: "It's the only way [using an engagement to get to know each other]....And then if it isn't any good I can break it." She seemed to be quite unaware or indifferent to the fact that breaking an engagement, a "divorce" in fact, could be damaging to her reputation. Khadija's father, seeing the dangers inherent in long engagements, disapproved of them ("My dad hates long engagements"). Khadija said that her father believed that engagements should be short so that the prospective bride and groom don't have a chance to change their minds. His opinion was that any problems that emerge between the couple could be worked out once they're married.

While Khadija had very limited expectations of what marriage held for her ("I'll do all the things I'm expected to do, like cooking and cleaning, and all that, but I just don't want him [her future husband] to *expect* it"), many of the other girls wanted husbands who would take a share in the household and childcare duties and include them in decision-making processes. Almost all of the girls desired or expected a marriage based on egalitarian principles. They wanted autonomy to work outside the home if they so chose, and above all else, they wished for a marriage based on genuine companionship. Some of them said that their ideas about marriage were modelled after their parents'. Nancy speculated that, compared to couples who remained in the West Bank, couples who emigrated to the US became more companionate, as they often were each others' only friends when they first arrived in their new, strange country. She reported that the marriages of all her American-Palestinian friends were of the kind she herself aspired to. Few of the girls saw the modified system of arrangement as an obstacle to a marriage based on romantic love and genuine friendship, and some of them went as far as to say that they believed it had a success rate superior to that of western-style arrangements based on free choice.

More than half of the girls' parents had traditional arranged marriages themselves, and 40% of these couples were cousins, well over the total percentage of just under one-quarter of ever-married women in the Ramallah-el-Bireh region (PCBS 1996a, 51). Rates of cousin marriage have remained constant across all age categories (ranging from 15-54) surveyed by the PCBS in the Ramallah-el-Bireh and area, with women between the ages of 15-24 reporting a 26.3% rate of marriage to their cousins, a 21.7% rate of same-*hamula* marriage (this category of consanguinity

seems to be in decline if compared with other age cohorts), and a 16.2% rate of non-*hamula* relative marriage (PCBS 1996a, 51). Ibrahim Ata (1986, 63) reports that "blood marriage" is more common among villagers and refugee camp residents than it is amongst town- and city-dwellers. Only one girl I spoke to, Dalal, reported family pressure to marry her cousin. Both her mother and her paternal uncle wanted Dalal to marry her patrilateral cousin, but she and her cousin didn't want each other. Not only did her cousin have a girlfriend in the US, but he and Dalal didn't "get along" with each other, and Dalal also didn't get along with her aunt or uncle. Ironically, her mother didn't like this sister-in-law either. Dalal confronted her mother about her wish for her to marry this cousin: "Why don't you want something good for me? It's always something bad. If I was a boy you wouldn't do this to me", to which her mother, according to Dalal, responded, "You're right." The idea of cousin marriage was distinctly unappealing to Dalal: "You know, [after] growing up in America, the idea [of marrying a cousin] is sickening." Additionally, her mother's family said to her, "Don't marry your cousin," apparently because in their eyes, cousin marriage was a bad idea. Dalal said that her mother's family have all had bad experiences with cousin marriage. Why her mother wants her to marry her patrilateral cousin is inexplicable to her. Cindy was also against cousin marriage: "I would never marry my cousin. I heard somewhere that it's bad to marry your cousin because you have the same blood and you can have kids who are mentally retarded."

Linda and Aisha were both under significant pressure to marry someone from their villages, and both agreed to the engagements. Several of the other girls reported that this type of marriage was ideal, because marriage outside of one's village implies that there's "something wrong" with the girl. However, the most common and recurring endogamy rules or expectations seemed to centre around the restriction on marriage to a non-Muslim. Black/African-American Muslims seemed not to be within the category of consideration. Whenever I asked the girls if this was an acceptable choice they looked surprised, as if they had never contemplated the idea before. Second to this was pressure to marry another Arab, and Palestinians were the most preferable. Arab-Americans seemed to be the most realistic choice for many of the girls and their parents, an issue to which I will return. Only Amal, as I have mentioned before, had complete autonomy to choose a man of any religion, ethnicity, race, or nationality. Indeed, one of her sisters had married a Christian Hispanic American with her parents' blessing. However, their family in Palestine didn't recognize her as part of the family after her marriage because she had married a Christian. When Amal confronted her aunt on her neglect to ask after her sister, her aunt said, "She's not part of us anymore."

The girls all had some very clear ideas about what kind of men they wanted to marry, and they seemed to accept without question the expectations of or limitations on which men to whom it would be acceptable for them to become engaged. For instance, Dina wanted to marry an Arab-American, and "he has to be Muslim....[and] I can't imagine marrying anyone but a Palestinian."

Khadija wanted someone who was "understanding, nice, fun, has to take a joke, [and I would] prefer [an Arab-]American." Lana said: "I want him to be from America. And I want him to be religious, but not really, really religious....I want him to be rich, I want to travel." Amal was concerned that she find someone who was "open-minded":

> I want to marry someone Palestinian....And I want to marry someone open-minded. And I want someone who can accept me in both societies [the US and the West Bank], and...in [leftist political, social, and cultural circles].

When I asked Sara what she wanted in a prospective future husband she responded with a list of attributes, including the fact that he must speak English--this was the most important criteria besides being Muslim. When I asked her if she cared whether he was from North America or not she looked surprised and said, "Well, if he speaks English, wouldn't he be?"[13] I also asked her if, like other girls in her class, she was worried about someone marrying her for her passport. Sara agreed that this was a concern, and that she preferred that he had his own papers, such as a US green card or Canadian landed immigrant papers. Also, she said, he must come from a "liberal-minded" family because she wanted to work after she gets married. She preferred that he be from Canada, and he couldn't be "cheap" or stubborn. He must have at least finished high school, and

> I want him to be religious....prays and fasts....but not all the way....the religious ones, they come to your house and sit with you for five minutes and then spend the rest of the time with your father. I don't want that. Are you marrying me or him?!

Dalal wanted a "college-educated" husband, and an "equal" marriage, with decisions made together. After seeing what happened in her own parents' marriage, she wanted to marry someone who was committed to keeping issues in the marriage to the marriage. In other words, unlike her parents' marriage, Dalal did not want either of their families to be involved in her marital problems with her husband. The most important characteristic of all was that he be Muslim, and preferably an Arab-American. I asked Cindy what kinds of things she would want to know about a prospective husband. She replied that she would want to know whether he wanted her to wear the *mandil* or not: "I asked my *din* teacher what I should do if he doesn't and he said that I should take it off and my husband would get the blame for it. But I don't know if that's right or not." Aside from this, Cindy said, "I just want him to be a good person, to not want me for my passport--you hear so many stories. I wouldn't mind taking a guy who already had a passport, so then I wouldn't have to worry."

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[13] In fact, this is not the case. Many Ramallah-area men speak English, although their level of proficiency varies considerably depending on their linguistic ability, level of education, and exposure to English-speakers and society. Men from villages would have less access to education and English speakers and society, and this would explain Sara's response.

From this it is possible to see that the girls all wanted Muslim men, and most of them wanted Arab-Americans, if not actually Palestinian-Americans. Marriage to a fellow Palestinian-American not only offered the possibility of cultural compatibility, but also the promise of return to the US. Some of the girls worried about being married for their passports, another reason to desire a Palestinian-American, and others wanted a "good" person, even a religious man, but not too religious. The concern that they would be chosen by prospective husbands for the sake of their US passports was very real, as I will discuss in Ally's case study below. In Deir Dibwan, a Ramallah-area village, Marisa Escribano and Nazmi el-Joubeh (1981, 156-7) report that girls with American passports secure a higher *mahr*. Many of the girls wanted their future husbands to have a post-secondary education, not just because it was a possible guarantee of good earnings, but also because they assumed an educated man would be a liberal man. In the West Bank it is common to hear the term "educated" used as an idiom for liberal or "open-minded" attitudes and beliefs. When someone holds conservative, "backward" or "traditional" attitudes and beliefs, it is frequently attributed to a lack of education or because they are "uneducated".

The older girls I spoke to, the young professional women, saw a contradiction between systems of arranged marriage, even if modified, and the kinds of men they were looking to marry. Nancy told me, that although looking to get married, she was not willing to settle for "just anybody": "I'm looking for someone who's open-minded....he'll probably be American-Palestinian....My parents say I'm being too picky." When Nancy described "her guy" the attributes included someone who was confident and assertive, but who gave her equal weight, attention, and respect, and someone who would support her in her desire to continue her education to the MA level in the US. Nancy said that she carefully watched the men who came to ask for her by asking them questions about their attitudes, and observing the way they spoke to their mothers and sisters as well as their body language. She said:

> The right guy's not coming....I want a young, fun, sociable guy....[but] there's a contradiction between my beliefs [in arranged marriage] and the kind of guy I'm looking for. The kind of guy I'm looking for would probably tell his mom, "No, I don't want to meet that girl you've seen. I'll find my own girl." He would do what he wanted. He would just go with the flow and let things take their course [he would reject the traditional way of finding a wife, arranged marriage].

But Nancy felt that she must operate within certain constraints:

> I want my parents to know what I'm doing....I do not want to go behind their backs....he would have to come to my house and meet my parents and ask them if he could spend time with me.

There was a small space within these limitations, however. While her father would not allow "dating" of any kind, Nancy's mother was more lenient. Nancy believed that her mother, after both

parents had met him at least once, would give her permission to meet a prospective husband for coffee in "the Quds" (Jerusalem, far from the village gossips), to spend some time to get to know him before agreeing to an engagement. Even so, Nancy wasn't looking to develop a full-fledged relationship with anyone, claiming, "I do believe in arranged marriages....It's like a business arrangement....And love will come later."

Riham told me that when she began to cover in the US after she had completed university her parents argued with her that she should think about her decision carefully. By this they meant, Riham believed, "Watch out--you're so picky now, who's going to come and get you when you're covered?" Marriage, Riham told me, was "a priority". When I asked her what she was looking for in a husband she answered that she was looking for a "tough" but "decent guy", "someone who loves their mom", and someone who is content with who and what they are, who knows what they want. Riham was adamant about her need for a passionate marriage, she had to "lust" for her husband, she said, and that if "chemistry" wasn't immediately apparent between herself and a potential candidate then she wasn't interested. She said that she didn't "buy the learn to love bit".

Riham was concerned, however, that her *mandil* might prevent the kind of man she wanted from ever approaching her because of the stereotype surrounding girls who covered. Here, she meant that it was popularly believed in the West Bank that girls wearing the*mandil* were too religious and didn't want to have fun. She didn't want her parents or family involved in her meeting or choosing potential husbands and was determined to meet men herself. In fact, she related to me one incident where she had heard of an eligible man and had gone herself to his family's home to meet him unescorted by anyone from her family. She turned out, after all, not to be interested. She was aware and observant of the Muslim restriction on man-woman relationships and appropriate comportment between the sexes, but was also concerned that she would never come to know any man well enough to agree to an engagement. She saw this as a difficult contradiction and didn't quite know how to surmount it.

Riham, then, shared many of the concerns that Nancy discussed with me. Both were from white, upper-middle class American contexts but could not select marriage partners from this milieu; both were looking for marriage candidates who they felt would not be attracted to the traditional modes of engagement to which they were restricted; both wanted unconventional, almost Hollywood fantasy-type men and both saw themselves as strong and independent women who were in control of their lives. Unlike Nancy, though, Riham had come to the West Bank independently of her parents. And unlike Nancy, Riham felt quite free to pursue and investigate potentially eligible men. By wearing the *mandil* Riham protected the family reputation (although this was not the reason why she covered), and herself from the censure that she surely would have received otherwise, given her

conduct. Her behaviour was attributed to her "Americanness" (i.e. strong-willed and independent, and perhaps also ignorant of local customs and expectations), but she was not considered "loose".

Finally, marriage was a ticket home, or as Nancy said to me, "Right now I'm beginning to feel like I want to get married and go back to the States. I feel like marriage is my ticket out of here." Cindy also said, "I know I'm not going back [to the US] unless I get married." And when Dalal tried to "convince" her paternal uncle to send her back to the US, his response was, "Over my dead body. The only way you'll go back is if you're married." Twice, Dalal said, in 1994 and twice again in 1995 young men "asked" for her, but her mother turned each of them away because she wanted Dalal to marry her patrilateral cousin. Two of the men were American-Palestinians and the other two had their green cards and were returning to the US. Dalal said that she wanted to marry each of them in turn just so she could leave the West Bank. But Dalal also remarked, "If we were in America the idea of marriage would have never crossed our mind, but ever since coming here it's a way of getting out." Nonetheless, Dalal reported to me that in retrospect she was glad she didn't get married any of those times. She said that she "wasn't ready." But Dalal did see irony in the fact that when her paternal uncle discovered that she was "asked for" he insisted that Dalal finish her university education at Birzeit. Yet whenever she asks him for her tuition funds he says he doesn't have any money.

It became apparent to me that although marriage was the best guarantee of a return to the US, few girls were willing to consider this avenue as a serious option. This is likely because, as I mentioned before, the girls had less latitude to redefine the meanings and processes of marriage than they had with the *hijab* and access to university. Only the older girls, the ones who had completed their undergraduate degrees and who were working, were actively seeking husbands or open to the idea of marriage. Ironically, these girls were not the ones who were engaged. As I will discuss in the next section, the engaged girls used the conventions already surrounding marriage in order to leverage what they wanted or, as in Aisha's case, to redefine in a limited and personal way the meaning of the engagement process. Ally and Linda both took advantage of existing conventions, or as in Linda's case, the variable meaning of the *mandil*, to secure their own investments in fantasies of themselves.

### *Engagement tactics and trading-off selves*

Ally, a high school senior at the time of our interviews, became engaged the second day she moved to Palestine. She was sixteen. At the time, Ally said, she only accepted because "I wanted to make everyone happy." He was a friend of her brother's, who had lived all of his life in Palestine. Her parents convinced her to accept, she said, despite her unease. Ally's own mother was beaten and

forced to marry her father. "You could see the blood through her wedding dress," said Ally. Her mother was then fourteen, her groom ten years older.

But right from the beginning Ally was unhappy with the engagement. He and Ally were not allowed to spend time alone with each other, and he only spoke Arabic and she only English. The driving motivation for the engagement seemed to be his friendship with her brother and his desire to move to the US with her family. Ally didn't like the fact that once married and living in the US she would have to take care of him until he could "stand on his own two feet": "I didn't want to look after him, he's supposed to look after me."

"I hated to sit or talk with him," recalled Ally, and when she told her mother that she wanted to break the engagement her mother told her to "give it time". But Ally's dissatisfaction persisted. He didn't spend any money on her or take her out, as is customary during an engagement, and Ally began to think, "If he's this way now, how'll he be when we're married?" He also "kept tabs" on her and her movements.

Finally, she couldn't "take it" any more and made the decision to "divorce" him. When her decision was made public, his family and the surrounding community said Ally made the decision because she wanted someone else. I asked her if her family believed that, and she said, "No, they know me." Her brother was furious with her, as were her parents: "My whole family was against me except my sisters....my mom was like, 'You're going to ruin your sisters' reputation. No one is going to want to marry them now.'"

Often, Ally said, when an engagement is broken they say about the girl, "She is used." "I'm stuck in the house now....I'm worried about what he's going to say about me," said Ally. As of our last meeting, the engagement still had not been officially broken because the divorce papers had not yet been signed by him or his family. Ally's fiancé moved to the US, leaving his father power of attorney to act on his behalf. His father wanted compensation money from Ally's family, and refused to sign the divorce papers until "his son's green card is in his hand." Ally was worried that her ex-brother-in-law was spying on her: "He wants to get some dirt on me." She was worried, she said, because the ex-brother-in-law was liable to make anything up to ruin her reputation. Ally said, "They'll [her family] kill me," if her reputation was further damaged. She meant it literally.

I wanted to include Ally's story because it closely conforms with the usual stereotypes that are conjured up when we hear that an immigrant family has moved back to the homeland to marry off their daughter. Ally clearly did not have much "choice" at the outset of her engagement arrangements. She wanted to make everyone "happy" by agreeing to the betrothal. Did she also have in the back of her mind her own mother's wedding story? Certainly violence crops up again

and again in her narratives. In chapter four, I wrote that Ally wanted to move back to the US because it was "safer" there with no one to question her reputation. She had no doubt that her family would kill her if she violated their honour. I did not have any way to determine if her fears were an accurate assessment of her situation. No doubt they coloured her actions.

Yet in the face of almost overwhelming family pressure, she insisted on a "divorce". Ally and her sisters, through their support of her, were willing to cross their parents and compromise their reputations, demonstrating defiance that was rooted in an understanding of their rights in and culturally appropriate expectations of engagement and marriage (*cf.* Kandiyoti 1988). Ally was concerned and angry that her future husband wasn't in fact, or even in pretence, going to honour his obligations according to traditional notions of Arab Muslim marriage: full economic responsibility for his wife. This, and his failure to conform to both traditional and modified practices of arranged marriage (i.e. his failure to buy her gifts or to take her out), as well as any notions of American-style romantic wooing, left Ally completely disinvested in her engagement.

Still, other girls, as we will see from Aisha's and Linda's stories that follow, managed to negotiate the terrain of marriage in more subtle, and even skilful, ways. Given her choices, Ally may have had few alternatives but to break her engagement. Aisha's story below demonstrates a set of circumstances that allowed her to take up various positions around marriage with which she was ultimately able to forge a favourable situation for herself.

Aisha became engaged two days after she graduated from high school. Her fiancé had been asking for her for a year, but Aisha had resisted her family's entreaties to meet with him until after her graduation. He had first seen her at his brother's wedding the previous summer, just before Aisha entered her final year of high school. Aisha, who knew at the wedding that he was "looking" at her, remembered that at the time she couldn't even dance properly. Her body just refused to cooperate, she said, because she didn't want him to "see" her.

Aisha not only resisted because she wanted to finish her education, but also because she felt, as is customary, that it should be her older sister that got engaged first: "My whole life [my older sister] was the first to do everything....she went to school first, she went to university first, and I thought that she should get married first." Her sister, on the other hand, was angry about being used as an excuse for Aisha to avoid the issue. She said to Aisha, "Don't use me as an obstacle to this thing." It wasn't until she and her sister "had it out" with each other that she was able to agree to "just talk" with her suitor, as her parents and her paternal uncle were urging. Aisha needed to know that her sister really didn't care if she accepted him before she even agreed to meet him. Of course, the custom that the eldest sister marries first was also a useful argument to deploy in order to divert the pressure on her. Well before her engagement, she had told me that this young man would be

"perfect" for her sister, and she really thought that those two should be the ones meeting together to discuss a possible marriage.

Their first meeting was cancelled by her paternal uncle, who especially wanted this engagement, because although Aisha was to meet her future fiancé at her family's house, her uncle didn't feel that there would be enough privacy for them there. All the aunts, uncles, and cousins would be bound to come by to see how the meeting was going. Instead they scheduled it for the next day at a park in Ramallah.

Aisha said that the whole night before the meeting she couldn't sleep because her mind was spinning with questions for him. During the days leading up to the meeting Aisha spoke to my husband and me about her anxieties. We encouraged her to go through with the meeting if her family was insisting so persistently, but to take the opportunity to ask him anything and everything she needed to know about him in order to make her decision. Aisha and the other girls all insisted that it was their "right" to ask suitors questions about themselves before making up their minds about an engagement. Michael particularly amused Aisha about how I had put him "through the wringer" before we decided to get married. She took Michael's advice seriously and decided to "grill" her suitor carefully before accepting or rejecting him.

Aisha said that at their meeting he was at first surprised and thrown off by all of her questions. She carefully questioned him on his ideas, his politics, his religious beliefs, and his other beliefs and values, but eventually he "relaxed into it", and where at first they only stole glances at each other, by the end of the interview they were looking directly into each other's eyes and talking freely and easily about all kinds of things, including his previous relationships with girlfriends. She "inquisitioned" him for three hours, and she says that by the end of it she felt sorry for him. Now, she said, they laugh about it, but she's glad she did it because it demonstrated to him that she wasn't going to say "yes" to just anybody, and that she wasn't some *"habla"* (dummy).

Despite the fact that Aisha and her fiancé like each other very much and were pleased with their engagement, at our last meeting Aisha said that "we don't use the word 'love' because we're not there yet....but I hope that one day we will be [in love]." This engagement, they both acknowledged, was in the first instance a marriage between their two families. Their two families wanted to be joined, he was the last unmarried son, and he chose Aisha. When his grandfather came to congratulate Aisha's family on the engagement, Aisha said that he hugged her and said that he was so happy because his grandson was marrying the granddaughter of his two favourite people (he was very close to both of her grandfathers). She was very moved by this.

It was important for Aisha to be taken seriously in this matter, especially since sometimes she was misunderstood and not taken seriously because of her penchant for reading romance novels and her easy-going manner. Yet she also espoused many feminist ideas; an example is her early critique of the *hijab*. Aisha had told me that she saw herself as a "hippy" type: concerned about the big issues such as peace and the environment. While she wanted to take control of the situation in front of her, she was also committed to her family and did not want to disappoint or refuse them. She was able to invest in both positions at the same time by modelling herself after me, an educated white western feminist but someone "who really understood [American-Palestinian girls]" (as she had once said to me about both Michael and me). In the example of my "engagement" process with my husband, Aisha was able to see an interface with her rights as an unmarried Muslim girl facing her own engagement prospects.

But even if Aisha had ended up rejecting her fiancé, she had been told by her family that she had to marry someone from her village. Her fiancé, she felt, was a good choice given these parameters. At the time of their engagement he lived in Aisha's US hometown, he used to work with her father, was an accountant, and was studying for his CPA exams the next spring. He was twenty-seven (she was eighteen), handsome, and serious but with a good sense of humour. They had an excellent joking and teasing relationship, she said, and were taking the year between their engagement and their wedding ceremony to get to know one another through their letters and phonecalls (he returned to the US and she remained in the West Bank). They made a commitment to each other, Aisha emphasised, to be "honest and loyal to each other" for that year.

Aisha felt that thus far she had avoided many of the problems that women experience at the outset of their engagements and marriages. She liked her future mother-in-law very much and reported that his family was going out of their way to meet her "halfway on everything....and they are the type of people who will continue to do this [after the wedding]". Her fiancé encouraged her to complete her university education--he said to her that he wanted his wife "to be all that she can be", and before she even asked him, he told her that he had always supported women's rights. Most reassuring of all, perhaps, was the fact that he told Aisha that he was committed to sorting out their marriage between themselves. "It doesn't matter what my parents tell you," he said to her, "what is important is what we decide between ourselves."

Aisha, who often felt "different" herself, liked the fact that her fiancé, in contrast to almost all of the other Palestinian men she knew and knew of, was actually using his degree in accounting and working as an accountant. Usually, she said, even Palestinian men with degrees end up just opening grocery stores. Her fiancé wanted to continue in his career as an accountant.

They hadn't discussed children or birth control yet. Aisha said that the subject was just too embarrassing to raise in what was still the early stage of their engagement, but she said that she wants children and didn't think she would wait until completing university to have them. Nonetheless, Aisha was determined not to lose her sense of herself as an individual person in her marriage. She was sometimes sceptical about the existence of real romantic love, even though her parents were themselves "sickeningly" in love.

In all of this, too, we can see how Aisha was able to deploy different versions of herself in one situation. She was able to be the dutiful daughter-in-law because her mother-in-law was accommodating. She also had reassurances that her future husband was committed to their marriage first. Given that she had to marry someone from the village, she felt lucky to have first pick of one of the village's most eligible sons and a young man who expressed interest in her as a person. And as we saw in the previous section, her parents had ensured that she could continue with her education once married. This context enabled her to be the obedient daughter, the self-determined young woman, and as we will also see, the fiancée in love who is also able to hold her own in a romantic relationship.

They were to marry the following summer in Palestine and then go back to the US where Aisha would continue university. While they were both working hard at getting to know one another, Aisha also knew, she said, that they are very different kinds of Palestinians. He was born and brought up in their village, but left Palestine in 1987 to go to the US for university. He did not return until the summer of 1995 for his brother's wedding. Aisha, despite being an American, was also a "child of the *intifada*".

Aisha said to me that being engaged was almost as good as being covered, in terms of other peoples' reactions to her. She experienced less harassment on the streets, and she wrote:

> After I got engaged, I got a little more freedom. Not freedom literally, but "room". Instantly I gained more respect from my relatives and those from my town who I interact with. I was given a lot more respect and treated as an adult. When before I wasn't allowed to listen to all the gossip going around, I now have the unwanted privilege of listening to everyone else's business.

Her "value", perhaps, also increased. Aisha wrote:

> I got an offer a few days ago, it was hinted by my aunt that if I agree to marry her brother-in-law, they'll help smooth things over with everyone involved in my current engagement. I was shocked! After all that had happened I can't even imagine anyone else! I realize that my feelings for Fadi go deeper than I'm willing to admit, because the thought of hurting him so much made me cry.

But Aisha was perturbed at her lack of engagement ring because "here, that's the first thing people say to you: 'Oh, can I see your ring?'" Her fiancé, although at their engagement party "covered me with gold, but he forgot the ring! Stupid Fadi." Despite this gaffe, the consensus amongst Aisha's friends was that she was lucky, she had found a "really good guy".

Aisha was swept up in the romance of being engaged. At the same time, she was able to redress the power imbalance of their age difference and his greater sexual experience by her construction of herself as the more experienced Palestinian. It is difficult to over-emphasize how important engagement in the *intifada* is as a rite of "Palestinianness". While Aisha's fiancé was born and raised in the West Bank, he missed out on one of *the* defining experiences of being Palestinian. Not so Aisha who was resident in the West Bank for several years of the uprising. Additionally, she was now a desired woman, sought after, and also an adult. Note her characterisation of engagement as being almost as good as being covered. She was acutely aware of the status conferred on her as a result of her engagement, and her rights to the material goods that mark that status, as evidenced by her annoyance that he forgot her engagement ring, the item everyone wants to see.

Aisha's engagement story demonstrates how one girl was able to negotiate a situation of modified arranged marriage to fit her own fantasies of herself. Some of these versions of herself are contradictory: the self-determined young woman, the loving and good daughter, the Palestinian *fallaha*, the desirable woman, the enviable fiancée. However, by becoming engaged she was able to mobilise these identities to navigate a favourable position for herself, and the engagement also enabled her to bring these identities out of contradiction with each other. For instance, a good daughter cannot be self-determined and sexually desirable, and a Palestinian fiancée is not always able to be self-determined either, but in her context and particular state of betrothal she could be all of these things.

Linda was also willing to negotiate with the traditional terms of engagement and marriage in order to leverage the best possible situation for herself. In her case, as we will see, she was able to mobilise the fluidity of meanings in the wearing of the *hijab* in order to secure her claim to an education while married. Linda began wearing *hijab* the year before I met her. I asked her why she didn't wear it in the US, and she said that although she believed in Islam in the US, she became "more religious" once in the West Bank. She added that her father didn't want to be "different" or be placed in a "difficult position" in the US where their immediate community included a large Jewish population. Additionally, Linda said, her father wouldn't have allowed her to cover until after she had become engaged. Linda explained that if you wear the *mandil* before engagement the men who come to ask for you tend to be "closed-minded" and have narrow expectations of women.

But Linda pointed out that this phenomena was a contradiction because "women wear it [the *mandil*] for more freedom."

Linda felt that she had learned a lot about Islam since moving to Palestine, and had put much energy into finding out for herself what was in the Qur'an. The *hijab* held triple meaning and utility for her: to commit herself to Allah, to express her identity and beliefs, and to gain "respect" and ward off unwanted sexual attention and comments from men in the West Bank. Linda said, "I've always wanted to show what I am" and that she was "excited to go [back] to America [covered]." Linda claimed that wearing the *mandil* gave her freedom and confidence, especially in situations in shared taxis where men were sitting too close to her. She felt that it gave her the moral highground to resist and confront unwanted attention of this type. Linda mentioned several times how the*hijab* prevented men from looking at her, that it sent out the "right signals", and that she thought that it would protect her from rape (something which I strenuously disagreed with her about). Even though she was engaged when she began to wear the *mandil*, her father didn't want her to wear it because he didn't think that it "meant anything or stopped anything". Linda's mother was more religious and prayed regularly, and began wearing the *mandil* after they moved to the West Bank.

Linda was engaged in the US when she was fifteen. Her fiancé, who was also her second cousin, worked in her father's convenience store business and was six years older than Linda. She said that people in their local Palestinian community in the US had been "asking for her" the whole year previous to her final engagement, but she and her parents never took these other offer seriously. Although she was originally intended for her first cousin, she told her parents that she hated him and wouldn't have him. When I asked her why she hated her first cousin Linda said that although he was "charming", a successful university student and a football player, she "couldn't stand him" because he was "perverted": he "tried things" when they were alone together. Her fiancé's offer was the first one her parents brought to her attention to consider seriously (all the previous ones they had rejected themselves). At first, Linda said, she was "totally against it" because she wanted to complete her education. But her mother encouraged her to "think about it". Nancy related that she would tell her mother, "Tell him 'no', it's out of the question", and her mother would respond, "Well, think about it." Her mother told her that she couldn't continue to refuse marriage offers from family. Finally, her mother put a final choice to her: she could either consider her second cousin who was currently asking for her, or she could choose someone "from the *balad*", meaning someone who had never been to the US before. To be a "stranger bride", to marry someone not from her *balad*, was out of the question because people would think that there was "something wrong with her" that they had to marry her to an outsider. Because Linda wanted someone who was also American she finally consented to the engagement. When I asked Linda if it seemed strange for her at the time to be engaged so young she replied in the negative: her father had always given her to understand that she would marry someone from "here". However, she added, when she

told her friends about her engagement she lied to them, saying that she and her fiancé had been "going out" for two years: "They thought it was so cool." Linda and her family moved to the West Bank a few months after the engagement, once school term was finished in the US, in order to facilitate the continuation of Linda's education. It was agreed that the wedding would not take place until after she had completed high school, but the move was in part necessary in order to avoid the dangers of a long engagement. Linda's parents didn't want "anything to happen" before the wedding night.

When I asked Linda to describe him to me she said, "He isn't as Arab as me." This was in reference to the fact that he had never been to Palestine until the year before our meetings. He had come to visit Linda. He was born in South America, and was "open-minded" but didn't want her to work, and was not religious.

Her fiancé didn't want Linda to wear the *mandil.* Linda thought this was because he was concerned that it might mean that she was zealously religious and didn't like fun. Before we had met, Linda had already decided that she wasn't going to wear the *mandil* for her wedding. I was surprised when she told me of this decision and I asked her how she had come to make it. She said that she wanted to enjoy the "Cinderella" fantasy of her wedding, and besides, "everyone" was against her wearing it for the wedding. When we first began our interviews, Linda told me that her fiancé and her mother were both against her wearing the *mandil* for the honeymoon too, but Linda herself felt that it was "going too far" to take it off for the honeymoon as well. This, she felt, would be a betrayal of her principles. But her fiancé was concerned about how they would swim and dance together in Spain, where they were planning on honeymooning, and Linda's mother argued that she would "stand out" more in Spain wearing the *mandil* than if she wasn't, and wasn't the whole purpose of the *mandil* to avoid attention? Besides, it would be something "to give" her husband, Linda's mother said.

Linda's decision to remove the *mandil* for her wedding made more sense to me when I found out that her access to post-secondary education after her marriage was at issue. Linda had the support of her parents in her plan to continue her education at university in the US after her marriage that coming summer. While her fiancé, who only had a high school education, in principle agreed, his mother did not accept the idea. Not that she had actively opposed it, Linda told me, it was just that while her fiancé, and even his two brothers, verbally supported her plans, her future mother-in-law remained silent. In order to keep her fiancé "convinced", and perhaps also to persuade her mother-in-law, Linda was sending her straight-"A" grade twelve report cards back to the US for them to see.

I asked Linda how she was going to deal with her mother-in-law if she didn't ultimately support her. After all, she and her future husband were going to be living in the same town as his mother. But Linda wasn't too worried, saying, "Luckily, she is quiet." Linda believed that because she had good relationships with her future brothers-in-law this would be added support when dealing with their mother. And, Linda added, her future mother-in-law treated the family like a tight, closed, close unit and didn't like problems. Linda felt that she could use all of this to her advantage.

Nonetheless, Linda wasn't completely sure of her fiancé's support. Even though he had agreed to her plans, he also suggested that they begin having children within the first two years of their marriage. Linda wanted to start using the birth control pill in order to ensure she did not get pregnant right away. As I mentioned in chapter four, she was already exhausted with assisting her mother in the care of her five younger siblings and was looking forward to her marriage as a break from the unceasing domestic labour that faced her at home. Besides, she knew that completing university would be difficult with a baby to look after. Linda told me that she wanted her fiancé to think that she was "strong", and that if she failed at university in her first semester, she wouldn't tell him out of fear that he might then discourage her from continuing.

At some point near the end of her grade twelve year, just a few months before her wedding date, Linda announced to me that she had decided to take the *mandil* off for her honeymoon as well. Given what she had earlier said on this issue I was startled by this latest development. I asked her why she had decided to acquiesce. Linda said that although her parents supported her decision to continue with university, the rest of her family did not. She explained that it was very unconventional and on the borders of acceptability for a wife to have more education than her husband. (I remind the reader here that Linda's mother struggled with Linda's father for his acceptance of her desire to acquire her BA.) A few weeks prior she had a fight with her maternal uncle about whether she would really go to university or not. This uncle had confronted her with the seemingly rhetorical question, "Do you really think that [your fiancé] will let you go?....If I was him, I wouldn't." This deeply upset her, and when her fiancé telephoned her that week she told him all about it. His reply to her was, "Do you really think I would be running around all over...finding [university course of study] programs for you if I wasn't supporting you?"

Nonetheless, Linda told me, she had decided to remove her *mandil* for the honeymoon in order to "give him something". She said that she felt "comfortable with this decision", adding that usually when she does something wrong she feels "really guilty about it", but that she didn't over this: "Allah knows what is in my heart." But, Linda said, she wasn't going to tell her fiancé about her decision right away. He would only know about it two weeks before the wedding. She said that she wanted to impress upon him how important this decision was to her, and that she wouldn't take the

*mandil* "off for just anybody or anything". She also wanted to demonstrate through this act that Islam isn't something "extreme".

While Linda and her fiancé had been engaged for two years, they still didn't know each other well. Almost all of this time had been spent apart. Linda said that although they spoke a lot over the telephone, and she felt that they had become "good friends", she had trouble imagining "anything more". Linda wanted to speak to me about sexual relations because, she confessed, the prospect of sex filled her with anxiety. She said that she had allowed him to hug her and kiss her cheek, but nothing more because she was afraid that he would think that she was "loose" and thus endanger his respect for her. She couldn't even hold her fiancé's hand without embarrassment, and was afraid to "do anything else with him" when they had spent time together because she was afraid that he would think that she was a "slut". Another girl told me about a girl from Linda's village who had slept with her fiancé after their engagement but before their wedding. The fiancé broke the engagement with her, claiming that she was "loose". Of course, Linda would have heard this story.

Because of her fears and Palestinian convention, Linda and her fiancé had no physical relationship, and I suggested to her that she and her fiancé take this aspect of their marriage slowly. I told her that in marriage she can refuse sex. Linda replied that "in Islam, 'no', but for me, 'yes.'" She had already decided that on their wedding night she would not agree to sex because she figured that she would already be tired and overwrought, and she didn't want to compound her stress by the prospect of facing her first sexual encounter on that day as well.

The last I heard, Linda had her "Cinderella" wedding, she and her husband were living happily together in the US, and she had started her first year at university.

Linda's story illustrates a rather stereotypical scenario of arranged marriage, but also reveals how Linda was able to deploy her identity as a devout Muslim to claim particular rights not even guaranteed in Islam, such as sexual autonomy from her husband. If nothing else, Linda's story demonstrates the fluidity of meaning of the *mandil* and a girl's ability to marshal these meanings to her own advantage. It was because Linda was invested in being a devout Muslim that she could also feel confident in her decision to remove the *hijab* to secure herself a favourable position in her marriage and access to a university education. As with Aisha, it is interesting to note that Linda redressed some of the power/gender imbalance in her relationship with her fiancé by staking a greater claim to "Palestinianness". Her fiancé had spent almost no time in Palestine, and knew very little about the homeland or how to be an Arab, but Linda had spent the last two years in the West Bank and literally wore her claim to Palestinianness, the *mandil*. She was willing, however, to remove this badge for him if he would delay sexual intercourse and permit her to undertake a university education, both concessions that potentially challenged his masculinity. Like Sara's

mother, Linda's mother was an encouraging and legitimising force in her decision to marshal the *mandil* for her own purposes. And as in Sara's case, it seems the bargain was successful.

## Identity options as negotiation and accommodation

In this chapter I have tried to illustrate how Palestinian-American returnee girls deployed a variety of identity options in strategic ways to accomplish certain ends. Sometimes these options contradicted each other, or the identity deployed did not seem to match the desired goal. But the girls themselves faced contradictory sets of available options, some definitely more desirable in their eyes than others. While most of them did not aspire to the lives awaiting other unmarried village girls their age, they did not want to sacrifice their good relations with their families by openly aspiring to more "American" lives. Many of them reported becoming "more religious" since moving to the West Bank, but they did not accept a restricted role for women and had ambitions for their own careers independent of future husbands and children.

The solution seemed to lie, then, in a skilful negotiation of various identity options to further their own individual ends. I do not mean to represent the girls as cynical and fully calculating operators. They were not. They genuinely believed their own rationales for the taking up of various identities at various times and in a variety of contexts, and were sometimes themselves confused by the obvious contradictions this yielded. It is only because I had the luxury of observation, not just of each girl, but of a group of girls all facing similar circumstances, that I was able to detect patterns. Of course, girls in similar contexts did not all make similar choices. Much of their "choice" was determined by personal histories and particularities of family relationships that cannot be generalised. The American-Palestinian girls I spoke to had a broad range of identity options at their disposal, as well as the opportunity to imbue practices of identity with new meanings informed by their multiple fantasies of themselves. For instance, the practice of wearing the *mandil* in the West Bank was imbued with meanings and intentions, not only of Palestinian notions of Muslim piety, but also that were related to ideas they had forged in the US, and even by "American" discourses, of their rights and ambitions for themselves as young women. In this way, piety became a mode of agency for the girls I spoke to who wore the *hijab*. A university education became a means of return to the US and reclamation of or an expression of hope for a "normal" (read: "American") life. Marriage arrangement, engagement, and relations with fiancés took on new forms as they were shaped by ideas of or desires for romantic love and subject to negotiations by American-Palestinian girls who were also insistent on acting out fantasies of themselves as accomplished, independent, and liberated young women.

Covering, education, and marriage were the three most pressing issues for the girls because of the stage of their lifecycle as unmarried, sexually mature girls. The mostly unspoken issue, return to the US, was entangled in these other dilemmas and was intertwined with their own fantasies of what kinds of young women they aspired to be and what kinds of lives they strove to achieve. While many theorists discuss the repeated movement of subjects across borders and the resultant constructions of new ethnicities, they rarely problematize these phenomena and analyze them at a micro-level (see, for example, Kearney 1991; Rouse 1991, but also see Mandel 1990 and Eastmond 1993 for good exceptions to this rule). What I think the stories of these girls demonstrate in this and previous chapters is that transnational identity is not one new construct, a melding of the dual identity of "there" and of "here", but is instead a collection of gendered, ethnic, racial, religious, and national identities or reference points strategically deployed from singular persons, contingent on particular and varying contexts and circumstances.

## Chapter Six

## From Detroit to Deir Dibwan, and Back Again?

> Just because I have an American appearance doesn't mean I don't carry Palestinian values.--*Laila referring to her headbanger style*

> These gestures of defiance against "Indian" norms did not mean that the women completely rejected their parents' heritage. In fact, they all mentioned that their decision to marry Indian men reinforced their ties with that heritage. The resistances surfaced when they tried to reconcile the realities of their lives with what had been handed down to them by their parents as tradition (Das Gupta 1997, 586).

When I first decided to research the lives of unmarried American-Palestinian returnee girls in the West Bank, I was most intrigued by how they managed to make the transition from growing up in the suburbs of the US to approaching womanhood in Palestine's villages. I wanted to know how they saw themselves both in the US and in the West Bank, and how they negotiated the differences between themselves and their families, neighbours, and peers in both countries. Most of all, I was curious about how the move to the West Bank shaped and altered their fantasies of themselves and the lives they hoped to lead as young women.

As I mentioned in my introduction, I was interested in studying gender and identity as they are shaped by transnationalism and migration, and the implications this held for transformation and change. Gender, family, and identity dynamics play major roles in migratory decisions and construction of transnationalism in the Palestinian-American case, yet this junction of issues is frequently missing in the theoretical literature.[1] Migration and the state of transnationalism frequently relegated American-Palestinian girls to social peripheries, both in the US and in the West Bank. This location on the margins opened new ways of being female and Palestinian, American, and Muslim. The lived realities and histories of the girls provided them with a number of identity options they could variously enact, depending on the context and their particular, and sometimes contradictory, identity investments. This raises a theoretical challenge to the notion of "hybrid" and "hyphenated" identities, including the nature of their construction, and particularly, the organic, seamless implications of the biological-genetic term "hybrid" when used to refer to a type of identity. The discussion of these "new ethnicities" (Back 1996) often seems to imply that they are singular and consistently deployed, even if they are sometimes in contradiction with their family relationships, histories, or context. What is often overlooked in

much of the literature is the fact that one person might carry several different and sometimes contradictory identity investments at the same time and in the same context. Post-structuralist analyses of the subject provide one lens through which to understand this phenomenon, while writings on migration, ethnic/racial/national identities, gender and kinship, and honour and shame offer perspectives on the nature of identity options and practices available to Palestinian-American girls. Although my project was not about the problems of migration and adjustment, these concerns continually emerged in the course of my research since they informed the daily concerns and problems the girls were forced to confront. This thesis uses this material to explore the dynamics of identity, and in the process also uncovers much interesting information about the dilemmas facing American-Palestinian girls in their daily lives, both in the US and in the West Bank. In particular, these findings reveal the contradictions and variability of American-Palestinian identities according to context and investment. Identity therefore emerges as fluid and multiple, demonstrating representations of self as sets of practices. Through this exploration I found that "hybrid" identities were, in fact, constituted by a collection of variable and sometimes contradictory identity options invested in and played out according to opportunity, context, and conscious or unconscious short- to long-term calculation of interests.

As with any ethnographic or other social science research, the point of departure for my investigations were inevitably based on my own assumptions, grounded in previous personal and professional experience and knowledge. From my own background as a Canadian teenager with friends who were children of immigrant parents and my professional experience as a counsellor of teenagers with family problems, I expected to find the American-Palestinian girls I interviewed to be seething with anger and rebellion. I was surprised, however, to find that although almost all the girls I spoke to were angry at being relocated to the West Bank from their suburban neighbourhoods in the US, and were resentful about the various double standards they were subject to in Palestine, few were openly rebellious or completely dismissive of the opportunities that lay before them to learn more about their Palestinian and Muslim heritage in the West Bank. In fact, several mentioned that they were grateful for their experiences in Palestine. However, at the same time, few of the girls could happily contemplate a life permanently centred in the West Bank, and most yearned, at least to some extent, to return to the US.

Aside from anticipating a degree of resentment that in fact I almost never encountered, I did not have any specific expectations. The questions I first began asking were exploratory and tentative, aimed at deriving an individual account from each girl about their families and

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[1] This is not to suggest that gender issues are generally neglected in writings on migration and transnationalism, but that the affect gender has on decisions about migration is mostly missing in the literature.

histories. The issues that I have discussed in this thesis only emerged through their constant repetition in each interview: contradictions between their gender, ethnic, and national identities in the US and in the West Bank; the role of the practices of restrictions, including those related to the demands of modesty, in the construction of their identities as unmarried Muslim American-Palestinian girls; covering, education, and marriage as sites of power, negotiation, and identity construction in the West Bank; a longing to feel "normal" once again and for America and things American.

The girls I spoke to were aware of internal contradictions, and many also mentioned differences between their identities and their parents' outlooks. In many cases their parents were uneasy with being Palestinian in America, and worked to maintain public invisibility of their "Arab", "Muslim", and "Palestinian" origins or identities. The girls, on the other hand, were more comfortable with being "American". At the same time, they were also comfortable about claiming a Muslim identity in the US, albeit a very different one from their parents', and some girls also found a valorised Palestinian identity appealing. The rap culture in the US, an entity that quickly moved from its origins in inner city black/African-American youth culture to exercise a broader appeal encompassing white suburban teenagers in the US, provided a bridge between Palestinian-American teenagers' Muslim and American identities. Nonetheless, this identity option was shaped by class position in the US, and some girls felt more comfortable with a "white" American identity, either mainstream or subcultural, frequently underpinned by residence in all-white suburbs and engagement in American shopping mall and consumerist culture. In most cases, their parents, situated in a different position, generally found it safer to publicly assume mainstream American identities. In order to maintain their "Palestinianness", these mainstream identities were accompanied by the restrictions they placed on their daughters, informed by notions of "honour" regulating their daughters' social and sexual comportment. At times of US adventurism in the Middle East, as during the Gulf War in 1991, as well as incidents marked by domestic disaster in the US, such as the Oklahoma bombing in 1995, the girls' and their parents' identities as Palestinians and Arabs came into abrupt disjuncture with their position as ordinary American citizens or their own identification as Americans.

Despite the fact that all of the girls I spoke to identified as "American", a full uptake of American identity was modulated by their Palestinian identity. In practice this meant that because the girls were not permitted to fully engage in what is commonly considered a "normal" adolescent social life in the US, their ability to fully identify as Americans was also undermined. Combined with family narratives on their "difference" from Americans on the basis of their ethnicity, nationality, and religion, all of the girls found themselves deploying identities that were only partially American, as well as only partly Palestinian, Arab, and Muslim. But while their partial "Americanness" was based on their exclusion from "normal" American life, their partial

"Palestinianness" and "Muslimness" was predicated on the facts of their birth and history as Palestinian-Americans with minimal knowledge and experience of life in the West Bank and minor exposure to the practice of Islam in the US. After all, the Palestinian tragedy was something that belonged to the generation of their parents, rather than their own, especially given the fact that most had never been to the West Bank before or had only visited occasionally or once before the onset of the *intifada.*

For most of the girls, a Palestinian or Arab, or even Muslim identity, was, at times, something that only seemed to deprive them of social freedom and impose a double standard that favoured their brothers. It is no wonder then, that aside from the pressure to "fit in" with their American peers, mainstream and subcultural American identities proved more appealing to them with their promise of emancipatory versions of young American womanhood. However, once in the West Bank the American identity that had promised them emancipation as young women in the US acted to expose American-Palestinian girls as sexual targets in the West Bank. Not only did a claim to Palestinian identity seem to be a means to dissipate the impression of their sexual availability as "Americans", but American-Palestinian girls often felt that they were "more Palestinian" than their local counterparts because of their stricter adherence to codes of modesty governing their social and sexual comportment. This was behaviour they were taught by their parents in the US as a hallmark of being "Palestinian".

The American-Palestinian girls I spoke to resented their exclusion by local Palestinians, who criticised their comportment, their lack of Arabic language skills, and their attitudes. In turn, American-Palestinians regarded themselves as "Americans" and local Palestinians as "Arabs". Thus, their claim to "Palestinianness" was complex and contingent. On the one hand they insisted, "Our struggle is the same and our blood is the same" (Hasan 1995, 95), and thus they were deserving of recognition as full-fledged Palestinians. Most of the girls identified with the Palestinian political struggle, and those who had lived in the West Bank during even a short period of the *intifada* felt a greater claim to Palestinian credentials. However, they also retained their identification as Americans, with its association of equal rights for women thus also keeping open possibilities for post-secondary education and certain rights of choice of their marriage partners. Besides, being "American" denoted a certain cosmopolitanism and sophistication that differentiated them positively from their *fellahin* cousins and neighbours.

Of *fellahin* origin in the West Bank, but of middle and upper-middle class in the US, their class position in the two societies were also at odds with each other. Their parents, almost all of whom originated from modest village families in the West Bank, moved up the class ladder in the US and were able to achieve a place in the upper-middle and middle classes. Their daughters had no other sense of themselves apart from being urban upper-middle and middle class Americans.

However, once in the West Bank, most of the American-Palestinian girls I spoke to were relegated to the peasant class by the Palestinian community in the West Bank. Although their parents possessed the means to achieve a comfortable material life, within the limitations of the Palestinian economy, the attainment of social prestige in the Palestinian urban middle and upper-middle classes was out of reach, determined as it is by descent and place of origin. This made their adjustment to living in the West Bank considerably more difficult. Not only did they miss access to American consumer goods and a high standard of living, but they were also perceived as "backward" and "traditional" by their local urban counterparts. This characterisation stung as the American-Palestinian girls I spoke to felt that to be "American" also entailed a level of sophistication and cosmopolitanism not available to the majority of Palestinians resident in the West Bank. Ironically, the girls sometimes felt most at home in Israel, where American-style consumer goods, amenities, and franchises are freely available, in contrast to their parents' Palestinian villages.

In this context, then, American-Palestinian girls were caught in a quandary whereby their American and Palestinian identities contradicted each other. The girls were nonetheless invested in retaining their American identities because of the emancipated versions of womanhood and individual rights they promised. However, the girls' parents were invested in their daughters' Palestinian identities as a means of affirmation of their own Palestinian credentials. This investment, fostered within the context of enmeshed "patriarchal connective" family relationships (Joseph 1993b) informed by migrant notions of "honour" and Palestinian identity, justified the parents' drive to relocate their American offspring to the West Bank and to arrange good marriages for their daughters to Muslim Palestinian men. Maintenance of their daughters' virginities and subsequent arranged marriages to men from good Muslim Palestinian families seemed an almost impossible task in the US. Moving to Palestine presented itself as the logical solution to the quandary of raising "good" Palestinian daughters in the American context where sexual and personal freedom and unchecked individualism seems to underscore American identity. American-Palestinian girls, then, were put in a position where to claim an American identity, particularly as expressed in desire to return to the US, was to jeopardise their parents' Palestinian identities, and threatened to cast doubts on the girls' own reputations and "Palestinianness".

Despite these conundrums, the American-Palestinian girls I spoke to harboured fantasies of return to the US and also about themselves as young women defined by American understandings of the "good life". However, because of the impossibility of openly expressing these desires, these fantasies were played out through practices surrounding covering, education, and marriage. The dilemma, or perhaps contradiction, in which the girls found themselves was that while they were impelled to demonstrate their commitment to being Palestinian they were at

the same time engaged in negotiations for their return to the US. For instance, it was commonly believed by both the girls and their parents that covering in North America was an uncomfortable if not impossible option. Yet a few of the girls I knew began covering as part of a broader strategy to delay marriage and attend university in North America. The girls hoped that covering would be a convincing and adequate demonstration of their "Palestinianness" and commitment to honouring modesty codes that their parents would accept as sufficient protection for them to return on their own.

This was the dominant concern and a turning point in the lives of many of the girls I spoke to. Longing for return to the country they grew up in as home, but emotionally, socially, and materially dependent on their families, they were frequently manoeuvring through a subtle and complex strategy of negotiation with their parents and themselves. An important or central part of many of the girls' negotiation tactics seemed to be an effort to demonstrate to their parents a level of "Palestinianness" they hoped their parents would deem sufficient for them to withstand the temptations of US society. Their parents, however, seemed to feel that actual "protection", in the guise of an accompanying brother or a husband, was the most effective safeguard against their daughters falling victim to further Americanisation, including marriage to or sexual involvement with an "American".

Covering, or putting on the *hijab* or *mandil*, seemed to serve several purposes. For one, it displayed Muslim credentials, and by implication, also affiliated them with being Palestinian. If they also wore the *jilbab* this "covered" their American demeanour and gait. Regardless of whether they wore the *mandil* only, or both the *mandil* and the *jilbab*, their claim on Islamic propriety also provided them with legitimacy to press for certain rights such as freedom from sexual harassment, access to post-secondary education, choice of when to marry and rights of refusal of suitors. Embedded in the girls' narratives were other aspirations and values such as a rejection of conventional valuation of girls and women on the basis of their physical beauty, delay of marriage, and a claim to a semi- or pseudo-adult status for single women. Parents were frequently unhappy about the girls' decisions to cover, believing that it would make it more difficult to find husbands, and fiancés felt that the status of being covered posed an obstacle to leisurely social pursuits and pleasures. In effect, parents and fiancés were concerned that the girls' headscarves signified a degree of religiosity that was unnecessary for young unmarried girls to display and unattractive to all but those who held the most stringent religious values.

The *hijab*, then, seemed to signify a radically different set of values and beliefs to its Palestinian-American wearer than it did to her observers. American-Palestinian girls' mode of wearing the *hijab* was reminiscent of Dick Hebdige's (1979, 17-18) description of subcultural appropriations of everyday signs (also see Mandel 1989a, 38-39) where subcultures and mainstream culture

engage in a "struggle between different discourses, different definitions and meanings...a struggle for possession of the sign which extends to even the most mundane areas of everyday life" (Hebdige 1979, 17). The American-Palestinian girls' *hijab* demonstrated

> that such commodities are indeed open to a double inflection: to "illegitimate" as well as "legitimate" uses. These "humble objects" can be magically appropriated; "stolen" by subordinate groups and made to carry secret meanings: meanings which express, in code, a form of resistance to the order which guarantees their continued subordination (Hebdige 1979, 18).

Ironically, American-Palestinian girls' wearing of the *hijab* was a mode of resistance deployed to claim a set of rights that are also commonly associated with the American feminist movement (also see MacLeod 1991, 136-7; Abu Odeh 1993). Wearing the *hijab,* then, came to represent something similar to what many, including several of the girls I spoke to, considered to be the antithesis of Islam.

Both education and marriage offered the promise of return to the US, but education was the means preferred by most of the girls I spoke to. It was only the girls who had completed their undergraduate degrees that desired marriage as a next step in their lives. Every other girl but one (and she did not want to return to the US) looked to university not only as a justification for return to the US, but also as an avenue to a "normal" life once again and to taking their first steps toward fulfilling their career ambitions and their desires to be independent young women, even within marriage. However, these careers and programs of university study had to be carefully considered and tailored to what was deemed appropriate by their parents, families, and even their communities. Finally, attendance at university also provided a means to delay marriage.

It was frequently assumed by the Palestinian community, and by the girls themselves, that their parents relocated them from the US to the West Bank in order to secure appropriate marriages for them. Indeed, it is a well-known phenomenon that diaspora Palestinians bring their daughters home to their West Bank villages during the summer "wedding season" months in hopes that an engagement might be arranged. The girls I spoke to were mostly ambivalent about marriage. They usually rejected any notion that they might get engaged before graduating from high school, despite the fact that early marriage is apparently common amongst Palestinian-American girls, and preferred to delay engagement, and certainly marriage, until after the completion of their post-secondary education. However, for some girls, marriage to a fellow American-Palestinian seemed a viable means to return to the US. While almost all of the girls, to varying degrees, accepted the arranged marriage system in the West Bank they were also concerned that the sort of man they wanted to marry might not himself participate in such "traditional" practices. These worries were exacerbated if the girl wore the *mandil,* since they feared that only "religious" men who subscribed to subservient roles for women and wives would be interested in

them. The girls also believed in romantic love, and while they did not expect their early courtship with their fiancés to be characterised by this sentiment, they ultimately wanted their relationships with their future husbands to develop into one of love and companionship. In effect, their ideas of how they saw and desired their prospective marriages seemed to be, at least in part, formed by images of love and partnership portrayed in American movies and television shows. Nonetheless, several of the girls also claimed that they modelled their ideas on marriage after that of their own parents', which they admired.

Their practices and narratives having to do with covering, education, and marriage revealed American-Palestinian girls' identity constructs to be multiple and contradictory, and sometimes tactically deployed. This does not mean that the girls were necessarily conscious of playing out different strategies based on their identity investments and the negotiations that surrounded them. In fact, I believe that many of the girls I spoke to would strenuously disagree that there was ever any tactical manoeuvring on their part or in their actions. Nonetheless, in each of the girls' series of narratives, practices, and stories there were also detectable patterns of histories and behaviours, precedents and actions that coincided with contexts, desires, hopes, and fantasies.

In the US and in Palestine the Palestinian-American girls were already "Palestinian" and "American" in ways that differ from their parents. This difference was the source of conflict and misunderstanding between the generations, and caused their parents a great deal of concern and the girls a great deal of confusion and frustration. Once in Palestine, American-Palestinian girls needed to learn how to be Palestinian, American, Muslim, and female in ways that differed from those they enacted in the US. Yet they carried their previous understandings, sentiments, and fantasies with them in the West Bank, just as they will carry their new understandings gleaned in the West Bank if they return to the US. This dynamic created a complex weave and overlaying of identities that multiplied their options. For instance, Edward Said (1984, 55) describes the process in this way:

> Most people are principally aware of one culture, one setting, one home; exiles are aware of at least two, and this plurality of vision gives rise to an awareness of simultaneous dimensions, an awareness that--to borrow a phrase from music--is *contrapuntal.*
>
> For an exile, habits of life, expression, or activity in the new environment inevitably occur against the memory of these things in another environment. Thus both the new and the old environments are vivid, actual, occurring together contrapuntally.

The American-Palestinian girls I spoke to were not only invested with their parents' sense of what being "Palestinian" was, they also developed their own ways of being American in the US and American and Palestinian in the West Bank.

This experience of a complex overlay of positionality demanded that American-Palestinian girls become skilful negotiators of their own lived realities. In addition, elaborate constructions of identity allowed for many spaces where innovation and even subversion was possible:

> diaspora women are caught between patriarchies, ambiguous pasts, and futures. They connect and disconnect, forget and remember, in complex, strategic ways. The lived experiences of diasporic women thus involve painful difficulty in mediating discrepant worlds....Diasporic histories may not be necessary conditions for developing performative visions of gender, sexuality, race, and ethnicity, but their liminal spaces, displaced encounters, and tactical affiliations provide apt settings for such visions (Clifford 1994, 314, 331 n. 22).

In tracing these negotiations and strategic identity deployments it was possible to locate the various relations of power and agency the girls were navigating and utilizing in order to play out their own investments. As Das Gupta (1997, 590) puts it,

> The women's accounts helped me to recognize signifiers of ethnic identity for what they are: relations of power that name, produce, and rename culture. Analysis of ethnicity as an effect of power that reorganizes gender hierarchies across nations departs radically from the depoliticized cultural pluralist position on diversity.

In particular, familial power relations played a fundamental role in the girls' calculations of interest and strategy, however unconscious or rationalised their personal stakes and actions might have been. For instance, girls who wore the *mandil* also professed a devotion to Allah. However, wearing the *mandil* might also have been an important bargaining chip in convincing their parents to allow them to return to North America for their university education's, or may have been an effective ploy to delay marriage that was beyond their parents' ability to seriously criticise because of its normative social legitimacy in the West Bank. Indeed, there may also have been an element of "calling the bluff" of parents by going one better on them in cultural terms. Thus, new identities were taken up, for instance that of the devout young Muslim woman, that also articulated or coincided with other identity investments the girls might have held, such as their identification with being "American" or an independent woman.

These "new identities" challenge the notion that to be "American", "Palestinian", "Muslim", or even to be a girl, necessarily implies a particular core or essential being as manifested in a closed set of practices. In the West Bank, where to be Palestinian means constantly to have one's home and one's being, sense of belonging and claim to place, history and future undermined, and under siege and threat, these new Palestinians in some ways pose an added and unwanted provocation and challenge to "Palestinianness" and the very idea of being Palestinian. In the milieu of the West Bank it is extraordinarily difficult to be "different" where difference has represented the source of dislocation, dispossession, abandonment, and failure, first in the century's early Zionist challenge and later as Arab nationalism and Palestinian unity have dissolved into fragments and

factions. A particular notion of Palestinian identity, rooted in the land and in a history of generations and centuries, a myth of an unchanging essence of "Palestinianness" has been the source of *samad*, steadfastness, in the face of Israeli violence and invasion of land and person, and has been a means of survival and a source of faith and determination to resist (Swedenburg 1990). Young American-Palestinians, despite or even because of their *fellahin* origins, with all of their multiplicity and foreignness pose an almost untenable threat to Palestinian identity and being, both for their Palestinian parents and even for their extended families, neighbours, and larger community in the West Bank.

Yet the girls I spoke to were suffering their own loss of place and sense of being as a result of being uprooted from their homes in the US. This exile produced the same effects in them in the West Bank as it did for their parents in the US:

> Experiences of loss, marginality, and exile (differently cushioned by class) are often reinforced by systematic exploitation and blocked advancement. This constitutive suffering coexists with the skills of survival: strength in adaptive distinction, discrepant cosmopolitanism, and stubborn visions of renewal. Diaspora consciousness lives loss and hope as a defining tension (Clifford 1994, 312).

This observation is relevant when I think of the girls' pride in being different, and how the exclusion and ridicule or prejudice they suffered in the West Bank as a result of being different only reinforced their difference and served to justify it in their own eyes.

In some cases, the American-Palestinian girls I spoke to became outright antagonistic about their situation of forced exile from the US in the West Bank. In a few cases the girls were obsessive about returning to the US, and this stance defined much of their experience and identity in the West Bank:

> [a] whole complex of pressures and constraints...lie at the center of the exile's predicament. There is the immense fact of isolation and displacement, which produces the kind of narcissistic masochism that resists all efforts at amelioration, acculturation, and community. At this extreme the exile can make a fetish of exile, a practice that distances him or her from all connections and commitments. To live as if everything around you were temporary and perhaps trivial is to fall prey to petulant cynicism as well as to querulous lovelessness (Said 1984, 54).

In almost all cases, just as their parents diligently maintained their "Palestinianness" in the US, if only by depositing and safeguarding it in their daughters' bodies, the girls I spoke to resolutely retained at least some parts of their "Americanness", preventing their full identification with their Palestinian community. I think that Janet Abu-Lughod (1988, 62) detected an important psychological truth about the dynamic of being a migrant when she wrote, "Only forced exile creates that unhealable rift between the 'self and its true home' which leaves the mover in limbo,

unable and unwilling to become fully part of his life in exile for fear that in doing so he will forfeit his life in his 'native place.'"

It is a cruel irony that the American offspring of Palestinian parents now form a diaspora in the West Bank, their exile enforced by the exigencies of family "honour". I do not know and cannot predict whether the girls I spoke to will find themselves back in their American homes. Yet, like exiles and migrants everywhere who repeat their experiences of home in the places they find themselves, American-Palestinians are busy recreating America and their fantasies of themselves as Americans in the Ramallah-area of the West Bank. Their experience of exile, however, is also undercut by the sentiment shared by local Palestinians, their parents, and even often themselves, that Palestine is their proper and rightful home, dictated by bonds of history, politics, culture, family, and identity. In this context, then, their "Americanness" and yearning for America is a betrayal, a moral and character flaw, a failure of the girls and of their parents. And so new versions of "Americanness" and of "Palestinianness" and "Muslimness" are created to mediate this contradiction. It is a testament to the girls and to the complexity of migrant identities that these new ways of being serve not only as survival strategies, but also as modes of creativity and resistance, and as a wellspring of renewal in a situation where newness brings with it both threat and loss and the promise of reclamation. It is in this paradox that new understandings of identities must be comprehended.

## Appendix A: Correspondence of Palestinian events with research schedule

| Date | Palestinian events | Research schedule |
|---|---|---|
| 7 September 1995 | | I arrive in Ramallah to begin research. |
| 2nd week September 1995 | Three new schools for American-Palestinian students open in the Ramallah area. | I begin collecting documents on girls' status in the West Bank and interviewing "experts", including current and former Friends School teachers.<br><br>Participant-observation begins at Friends School. |
| 8 September 1995 | Salman Azamareh is shot and killed by masked men near his home in Halhul. Radical settler groups, "Eyal" and "David's Sword" claim responsibility. | |
| 10 September 1995 | Abdul Fatah Rantisi from Gaza, sentenced to life in 1993 for killing a collaborator, is killed by collaborators in his cell in Ashqelon prison. His is the 41st death in detention since the beginning of the *intifada*. | |
| 13 September 1995 | Jewish settlers attack Qurtuba Girls' Elementary School in Hebron for the 5th day demanding the removal of the Palestinian flag. Israeli army disperses parents and residents with teargas and rubber bullets. Over 25 pupils and some 20 toddlers from a nearby kindergarten have to be hospitalised. | |
| 27 September 1995 | Due to Jewish holidays, Israel closes off the West Bank, cancels all permits (consecutively extended for more than two weeks). | |
| 28 September 1995 | In Washington, the PLO and Israel sign the "Oslo 2" Agreement on the second stage of Palestinian autonomy. | |
| 29 September 1995 | Azzam Abdel Rahim dies in PNA custody in Jericho. His is the 5th death in PNA detention since May 1994. | |
| 7 October 1995 | Mohammed Abu Shaqra dies as a result of torture while in Israeli detention at Ansar 3 prison.<br><br>Peres and Arafat meet at Erez; the Israelis present redeployment maps that vary from those agreed on in the Taba accords, causing a crisis. | |
| 26 October 1995 | Islamic Jihad leader Dr. Fathi Shikaki assassinated in Malta. The Mossad is the suspected perpetrator. | |
| 29 October 1995 | Islamic Jihad releases a communiqué on the assassination of its leader Fathi Shikaki, calling all Zionists "target of our attacks" and declaring Dr. Ramadan Abdullah Shalah new head of the movement. | |

| Date | Palestinian events | Research schedule |
|---|---|---|
| 30 October 1995 | | I begin interviewing respondents. |
| 4 November 1995 | Law student Yigal Amin assassinates Israeli PM Yitzhak Rabin at a peace rally in Tel Aviv.<br><br>Closure is imposed on the West Bank and Gaza Strip. | Closure interrupts meetings with respondents, interviews with "experts", and documents collection for several days. |
| 18 November 1995 | Departments for transport, licensing, weather, passports, population registry, employment, and land registration transferred to the PNA. | |
| 2nd week December 1995 | | Christmas exams begin at Friends School for a period of 2 weeks. |
| 11 December 1995 | Palestinian forces arrive in the Ramallah area. | |
| Christmas week 1995 | | Christmas holidays at Friends. |
| 27 December 1995 | IDF leaves Ramallah. Palestinian forces take control of city. | |
| 30 December 1995 | Arafat visits Ramallah, declares the city and neighbouring el-Bireh liberated. | |
| 1st week January 1996 | | Classes at Friends School resume. |
| 5 January 1996 | Hamas activist Yahya Ayyash, "The Engineer", dies when his booby-trapped mobile phone goes off in the house in Beit Lahia, Gaza, where he was hiding. | |
| 16 January 1996 | Two Israeli soldiers killed near Beit Umar where their car gets fired at. | |
| 19 January 1996 | In Jenin, Israeli soldiers kill 3 alleged Hamas supporters who attacked an army post. | |
| 20 January 1996 | First Palestinian elections take place. | |
| 21 January 1996 | Ramadan begins. | School/work days shortened to accommodate Ramadan. Meetings with respondents and interviews with "experts" are interrupted. |
| January 1996 | Fatah abolishes the strikes on the 9th of each month, formerly commemorating the anniversary of the start of the *intifada*. | |
| 3 February 1996 | PNA Security forces kill 2 Islamic Jihad activists during a shoot-out in Gaza. | |

| Date | Palestinian events | Research schedule |
|---|---|---|
| 12 February 1996 | Yasser Arafat sworn in as first elected President of Palestine.<br><br>Israel imposes a closure on the West Bank and Gaza until the end of *E'id al-Fitr* (22 Feb.). | |
| 20 February 1996 | *E'id al-Fitr.* | Friends School holidays to commemorate the *E'id.* |
| 3rd week February 1996 | | I approach Friends School for permission to interview their students. |
| 25 February 1996 | Two suicide bomb attacks--one on a bus in Jerusalem, one at a bus stop near Ashqelon--leave 25 people dead and dozens injured. "Yahya Ayyash Unit" claims responsibility.<br><br>Israel imposes closure on the West Bank and Gaza. | Interviews with "experts", and documents collection are interrupted until end of March. |
| 26 February 1996 | A Palestinian-American is gunned down by settlers after running into an Israeli-used bus stop at French Hill, killing 1, injuring 20. | |
| 29 February 1996 | Izz-Eddin al-Qassem units propose Israel a cease-fire on the condition that Israel announce—by 8 March—its willingness to end terror acts against Palestinians and to free all Hamas prisoners. | |
| 3 March 1996 | A suicide bomber on a West Jerusalem bus leaves 20 people dead and many more injured.<br><br>Israeli PM Peres announces a halt in the peace talks with the PLO and declares war on Hamas. | |
| 4 March 1996 | A pedestrian blows himself up at Tel Aviv's Dizengoff Center, killing 12. "Yahya Ayyash Unit" claims responsibility. | |
| 5 March 1996 | Israel seals off the Palestinian territories, separates areas A and B from each other, imposes an internal closure and puts 465 cities and villages under town arrest. Palestinian institutes and PNA offices are raided in the West Bank. | Meetings with respondents are interrupted until end of March. |
| 9 March 1996 | Izz Eddin al-Qassem units issue statement, declaring an all-out war on Israel. | |
| 15 March 1996 | IDF blows up the house of Yahya Ayyash's family in Rafat, Nablus area. | |
| 22 March 1996 | PNA Labour Minister Samir Ghosheh states that due to the closure, unemployment among Palestinians has reached 78%. | |
| 28 March 1996 | IDF raids the town of Birzeit and surrounding villages, arrest 376 residents, including 280 students.<br><br>Israel imposes internal closures on Ramallah-area municipalities, villages, and camps.<br><br>Deadline for Israeli withdrawal from Hebron passes without any redeployment taking place. | Meetings with respondents, interviews with "experts", and documents collection are interrupted for several days. |

| Date | Palestinian events | Research schedule |
|---|---|---|
| 1st week April 1996 | | Schedule of interviews with Friends School students begins. |
| 1 April 1996 | Palestinian security opens fire on a Palestinian car in Ramallah, killing Taysir Lowzi and wounding another passenger. | |
| 3 April 1996 | PLC meets for the first time in Ramallah; during the session, 1,500 students march from Birzeit to Ramallah protesting PNA's crackdown on the opposition and the recent raid at an-Najah University. | |
| 4 April 1996 | Mass demonstration of West Bank students takes place in Ramallah in protest of the performance of PNA and its security apparatus, particularly the events at An-Najah University on 30 March. | |
| 7 April 1996 | Catholic Easter. | Friends School holiday from Catholic until Orthodox Easter (1 ½ weeks). |
| 14 April 1996 | Orthodox Easter. | |
| 18 April 1996 | President Arafat and Israeli PM Peres meet at Erez for the first time since the suicide bombings in February/March, confirm that final status talks will begin as scheduled on 4 May. | |
| 24 April 1996 | PNC votes to amend the PLO Covenant by 504 votes to 54, with 14 abstentions. | |
| 5 May 1996 | Final status talks between Israel and the PNA begin in Taba. | |
| 8 May 1996 | The Islamic Bloc wins the Student Council elections at Birzeit University. | |
| 17 May 1996 | *E'id al-Adha*. | Friends School holidays to commemorate the *E'id*. |
| 3rd week May 1996 | | Friends School breaks for exam study period. |
| Last week May 1996 | | Friends School graduation celebrations. |
| 29 May 1996 | Israeli elections (14th Knesset) take place. | |
| 1-2 June 1996 | Final results of Israeli elections are published. Netanyahu wins PM election with 29,000 votes ahead of Peres. | |
| 5 June 1996 | Trilateral (Jordanian-Egyptian-Palestinian) summit concluded in Aqaba, endorsing peace and stressing the inevitability of the establishment of an independent Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital. | |
| 2nd week June 1996 | | Friends School final exams. |

| Date | Palestinian events | Research schedule |
|---|---|---|
| 12 June 1996 | Second deadline for redeployment from Hebron passes; postponed to an uncertain date. | |
| 17 June 1996 | | School summer holidays. I return to London and Canada until August. |
| June 1996 | Two leaflets issued by the "Strike Forces of the Popular Committees for Palestinian National Solidarity" appear in Hebron, calling for a renewal of the *intifada* in order to speed up Israeli withdrawal from the city.<br><br>PNA Ministry of Interior announces the issuing of 160,000 Palestinian passports thus far. | |
| 19 July 1996 | Thirty-seven Palestinians held without charge in the PNA Nablus prison begin an open-ended hunger strike. | |
| 20 July 1996 | Runner Majdi Abu Mraheel carries the Palestinian flag into the stadium of Atlanta, marking the first ever appearance of Palestinians at the Olympic Games. | |
| 30 July 1996 | Mahmoud Jamal Jamayyel from Nablus declared brain dead as a result of torture by the PNA who had kept him in detention for months without being charged. | |
| 1 August 1996 | PNA police shoots dead Ibrahim Hadayeh from Tulkarem when firing on a group of demonstrators protesting outside the Tulkarem prison against the PNA's treatment of prisoners in PNA jails following the previous day's announcement of Jamayyel's death.<br><br>A Hamas leaflet appears in the Palestinian territories hours after the Tulkarem incident calling for a new *intifada* against both the PNA and Israel. | |
| 2 August 1996 | The Israeli cabinet voted unanimously to cancel restrictions on settlement development in the West Bank and Gaza, lifting the Labour government's partial freeze of settlement expansion. | |
| 10 August 1996 | Khaled Habal from Kharbata dies in PNA custody, marking the 10th death of a prisoner in PNA jails. | |
| 18 August 1996 | Ramallah High Court issues decision that the 10 Birzeit students held since the April demonstrations in Ramallah be released. | |
| 3rd week August 1996 | | I begin interviewing Birzeit University students. |

| Date | Palestinian events | Research schedule |
|---|---|---|
| 29 August 1996 | Palestinians throughout the territories observe a 4-hour general strike called by Arafat in protest of Israeli house demolition and settlement policies. | |
| 1st week September 1996 | | I approach Al-Najah, SAS, and el-Urdonieh schools for permission to meet with their students. |
| 4 September 1996 | Arafat and Netanyahu meet for the first time at Erez Checkpoint. | |
| 2nd week September 1996 | | I begin meeting el-Urdonieh students. |
| 14-15 September 1996 | Called for by Egyptian President Mubarak, Arab League holds extraordinary meeting in Cairo to discuss Israel's announcement to build more settlements. | |
| 3rd week September 1996 | | I begin follow-up meetings with Friends School respondents. |
| 24 September 1996 | At dawn, the Israeli government inaugurates a tunnel under *Haram al-Sharif* compound (linking Via Dolorosa with the Wailing Wall). Thirty Palestinian protestors demonstrate in Jerusalem. | |
| 25-28 September 1996 | In the wake of the news of the tunnel opening, clashes between Palestinians and Israeli forces break out in Jerusalem; civil unrest spreads throughout the Palestinian Territories. During the ongoing clashes the Israeli army uses Cobra helicopters and heavy automatic weapons against unarmed civilian Palestinian demonstrators. Israel also moves tanks into the West Bank, the first time since 1967, to encircle Palestinian cities. Israeli army enters area A (Ramallah and Bethlehem). Movement between West Bank cities, villages, and camps becomes impossible because of clashes.<br><br>Finally, with the call for a summit in Washington, the situation calms down. Over the past days, 62 Palestinians were martyred, more than 1,600 injured; 14 Israeli soldiers were killed, 50 wounded.<br><br>Israeli imposes internal closure on the West Bank. | Meetings with respondents, interviews with "experts", and documents collection are interrupted until mid-October. |
| 3 October 1996 | Israel cuts off Palestinian internet channels to block sending and receiving of information. | |
| 3-4 October 1996 | Summit in Washington between Arafat, Netanyahu, Clinton, King Hussein (Mubarak refused to attend) ends with no results. | |
| 6 October 1996 | Netanyahu and Arafat meet at Erez; talks end with no progress. | |
| 15 October 1996 | King Hussein comes to Jericho – the first Arab leader to visit the autonomous areas – and announces his opposition to the Israeli stand on the peace talks. | I begin meeting SAS students. |

| Date | Palestinian events | Research schedule |
|---|---|---|
| 16 October 1996 | Israel and the PLO resume interim-period talks in Taba. | |
| 21 October 1996 | Settlers near Ofra Settlement shoot and kill Fathi Ali Assahouri in a drive-by shooting. | |
| | Settlers shoot and kill Abdullah Karakara. | |
| 23 October 1996 | French President Chirac visits Ramallah. | |
| 10 November 1996 | Israeli soldiers kill one Palestinian and injure 12 when firing at demonstrators protesting land confiscation outside Ramallah. | |
| 12 November 1996 | Cairo Economic Conference begins; many Arab countries, including Palestine, Syria and Lebanon boycott due to the strained political atmosphere in the region. | |
| November 1996 | Knesset passes first reading of the 1997 budget plan, appropriating $300 million for settlement activity. | |
| 2nd week-31 December 1996 | Christmas period. | Beginning of Christmas exam and holiday period. |
| 1st week January 1997 | | School term begins. I begin distribution of accounts of interviews to girls and follow-up with SAS and el-Urdonieh students. |
| 1 January 1997 | Israeli soldier Noam Friedmann, a settler from Ma'ale Adumim, opens fire at passers-by in the Hebron marketplace, injuring six. Asked for his reasons, he says he wanted to kill Arabs to prevent redeployment from Hebron. | |
| 2 January 1997 | Israeli Finance Minister Dan Meridor announces that IS100 million (US$33 million) is to be allocated for settlement expansion in the Golan Heights and Jordan Valley. | |
| 3 January 1997 | The protocol of the Ministerial Committee on Settlement, chaired by Prime Minister Netanyahu, commits the government to "full development of the Jordan Valley as a wide strip of settlement comprising the eastern portion of the State of Israel". This commitment is expressed in the paving of Road #90 during 1997 and its completion in 1998, and the development of the settlement of Ma'ale Ephraim as the "regional city of the Jordan Valley". | |
| 5 January 1997 | Israeli Defence Minister Mordechai announces plans to enlarge the settlement of Beit El, outside of Ramallah. | |

| Date | Palestinian events | Research schedule |
|---|---|---|
| 10 January 1997 | Ramadan begins. | School days shortened to accommodate Ramadan. Meetings with respondents and interviews with "experts" are interrupted. |
| 15 January 1997 | The PLO and Israel conclude a protocol on Israeli redeployment from Hebron. The agreement is accompanied by letters of assurances from the US and the EU concerning negotiations on other outstanding interim issues and a timetable for three "further redeployments" from unspecified portions of the West Bank, beginning in March 1997 and ending in mid-1998. | |
| 16 January 1997 | The Netanyahu government approves by a vote of 11 to 7 the IDF redeployment in Hebron. An announcement after the vote notes that the government will "work to protect the conditions and necessary requirements for the existence, security, and livelihood of the Jewish community in Hebron." The government decision notes that "details of the next stages of redeployment in Judea and Samaria will be determined by the government of Israel." | |
| 17 January 1997 | Israel redeploys its troops from the city of Hebron, transferring control of 80% of the city to the PNA ("H1"). The Israel army will continue to devote significant resources to protect the city's some 450 settlers.<br><br>Palestinian police enter the liberated part of Hebron. | |
| January 1997 | Human rights organizations announce that at least 1,600 Palestinians are held in PNA custody, 700 of them without charge. | |
| 1 February 1997 | Yousef Ismail Baba dies in Rafidiya Hospital, Nablus, after being tortured during interrogation by PNA security forces, marking the 11th to die in PNA detention. | |
| 8 February 1997 | *E'id al-Fitr.* | School holidays to commemorate the *E'id.* |
| 10 February 1997 | The Israeli army presents a final status map to the cabinet. With this map as a guide, cabinet members estimate that Israel will retain 51.8% of the West Bank in any permanent arrangement, while the Palestinians will retain 48.2%. | |

| Date | Palestinian events | Research schedule |
|---|---|---|
| 11 February 1997 | After Israel's Supreme Court clears the way for the release of female Palestinian prisoners, the 31 women are released from Tel Mond prison, 1½ years after their release was scheduled in the Oslo II Accords. Twenty-two of them were serving life sentences.<br><br>Seven Palestinians are injured during a protest against the confiscation of land near Tulkarem for the creation of 5 stone quarries. | |
| 16 February 1997 | Palestinian-Israeli talks resume for the first time after the signing of the Hebron Agreement to discuss the outstanding elements of the Oslo Accords. | |
| 18 February 1997 | The Palestinian Security Exchange (stock market) opens for trading in Nablus. | |
| 20 February 1997 | Arab-American University in Jenin inaugurated. | |
| 3 March 1997 | The Palestinian Territories observe a general strike, called by the PLC in protest of Israeli settlement policies in general and the *Jabal Abu Ghneim* case in particular. | |
| 6 March 1997 | PM Netanyahu's cabinet approves the first of 3 "further redeployments" agreed to in the Oslo II Accord. The government intends to transfer 2% of the West Bank (108 sq. km) from Area C to Area B and A status, and 7.1% of the West Bank from Area B to Area A status, and bring 50 additional villages and 200,000 more West Bank Palestinians under the control of the PNA. After the redeployment has taken place, the PNA will exercise full control (Area A) over less than 10% of the West Bank. | |
| 9 March 1997 | Minister of Trade and Industry Natan Sharansky approves a US $30 million program to encourage investment, including in the settlements of Kiryat Arba, Betar, Emmanuel, and Ma'ale Ephraim in the West Bank, Neve Dekalim in Gaza, and Katzrin on the Golan Heights. | |
| 10 March 1997 | President Clinton meets Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak as new tensions flare up in the Middle East over Israeli withdrawal plans from the West Bank. | |
| 13 March 1997 | The PLC holds an emergency session in Bethlehem, calling for the suspension of talks with Israel. | |
| 17 March 1997 | The final status negotiations fail to begin as planned when the PLO refuses to attend in protest of Israel's unilateral action (planned settlement construction at *Jabal Abu Ghneim*) to pre-empt the talks.<br><br>Israel imposes intermittent closures on the West Bank until beginning of June. | Closures intermittently interrupt follow-up with respondents, interviews with "experts" and document collection until June. |
| 18 March 1997 | Israel begins construction on the new "Har Homa" settlement on *Jabal Abu Ghneim*. The PNA responds by halting the peace negotiations. | |

| Date | Palestinian events | Research schedule |
|---|---|---|
| 19 March 1997 | Israeli PM Netanyahu proposes a new deal to the Palestinians: an all-out striving to settle the final status issues in 1997. Palestinians reject the plan, saying Netanyahu cannot be trusted and insisting that Israel stick to the pending implementation of the original interim agreements. | |
| 21 March 1997 | The US vetoes a second UN Security Council resolution critical of Israeli construction at Har Homa.<br><br>A bomb placed by a Palestinian in a Tel Aviv café kills 3 Israelis.<br><br>Israel imposes closure on the West Bank and Gaza. | Closure interrupts meetings with respondents for several days. |
| 28 March 1997 | US Middle East envoy heads for home without scoring a breakthrough during an emergency Middle East mission to salvage crumbling Israeli-PLO peace talks. | |
| 30 March 1997 | Catholic Easter.<br><br>The Knesset Finance Committee approves a special allocation of US$16 million for reinforcement of settlement in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, as promised in the agreement establishing the governing coalition. | School holidays to commemorate Catholic Easter. |
| last week March 1997 | Over 400 Palestinians are injured in clashes with the Israeli army that broke out in protest against the Israeli settlement construction on *Jabal Abu Ghneim*.<br><br>Israel imposes closure on the West Bank.<br><br>The UN special investigator on torture accuses the Jewish state of institutionalising the use of torture in interrogating Palestinian detainees and puts Israel on a list of 29 countries where torture is a fairly extensive problem. | Closure interrupts follow-up with respondents for several days. |
| 1 April 1997 | Two suicide bomb attacks fail in Gaza, one near Kfar Darom settlement, the other near Netzarim settlement. | |
| 2 April 1997 | After a bomb is thrown at an Israeli bus in the West Bank, causing it to overturn and wounding 11 soldiers, Israeli PM Netanyahu says Israel will not resume peace talks as long as Palestinian bomb attacks—touched off by continuing Israeli settlement construction in the Palestinian Territories—continue.<br><br>Israel imposes closure on the West Bank.<br><br>The Israeli government confirms its approval of further expansion of Jewish settlements in the West Bank. Israeli Channel 2 reports that Defence Minister Mordechai has approved "dozens of plans for construction in various settlements throughout the territories." | Closure interrupts follow-up with respondents for several days. |

| Date | Palestinian events | Research schedule |
|---|---|---|
| 5 April 1997 | Teachers across the Palestinian Territories resume their strike following the suspension by the PNA Ministry of Education of 19 teachers. | |
| 8 April 1997 | Israeli soldiers and Jewish settlers kill 3 Palestinians and wound 103 others in fierce West Bank clashes after failed US attempt to revive Middle East peacemaking. | Closure interrupts follow-up with respondents for several days. |
| | Israeli imposes closure on the West Bank. | |
| 9 April 1997 | A Jewish settler shoots dead a Palestinian in Hebron. Following the incident rioting breaks out and Israeli forces kill 2 more Palestinians and injure over 100. | |
| 13 April 1997 | A Palestinian woman crossing into the Israeli-occupied West Bank from Jordan opens fire at Israeli guards, wounding 2. | |
| 22 April 1997 | Palestinian security forces arrest 25 teachers for "abusing power and authority and for incitement." | |
| 25 April 1997 | An emergency special session of the UN General Assembly approves a resolution with 134 in favour and 3 against (US, Israel and Micronesia) for a halt in construction at Har Homa and an end to all settlement activities in the occupied territories. | |
| 27 April 1997 | Orthodox Easter. | School holidays to commemorate Orthodox Easter. |
| 7 May 1997 | *E'id al-Adha.* | School holidays to commemorate the *E'id.* |
| 18 May 1997 | Israeli Defence Ministry officials state that 500 more Palestinian homes have been targeted for demolition in the West Bank, all located in Area A and near settlements, by-pass roads, or Israeli army bases. | |
| 21 May 1997 | Khaled Ali Abu Dayya, 37, dies in Share Zedek Hospital after being detained and interrogated in the Mosqobiya Prison in Jerusalem for 1 week. | |
| 24 May 1997 | The report of the PNA Monitoring Institution reveals that public funds in the amount of US$326 million have been misused by the PNA. | |
| 29 May 1997 | A new crisis erupts in the deadlocked Middle East peace process over reports that Israeli PM Netanyahu plans to hand back to the Palestinians less than 40% of the occupied West Bank, while Israel will keep the remaining 60%. | |
| | Meretz party reports that Israel has confiscated 30,000 dunums of Palestinian land in the West Bank since January 1997, including 20,000 dunums located in the Jerusalem area. | |

| Date | Palestinian events | Research schedule |
|---|---|---|
| 1st-3rd week June 1997 | | Completion of meetings and follow-up sessions with respondents. |
| 8 June 1997 | Israeli and Palestinian negotiators meet for the first time in more than 2 months in an attempt to restart the peace process. The meeting is attended by Egyptian mediator Osama Al-Baz. | |
| 13 June 1997 | The first Palestinian national soccer match takes place in Jericho against the Jordanian national team; ends with a draw. | |
| 16 June 1997 | Israeli soldiers shoot and wound at least 38 Palestinians in the third day of clashes in Hebron. In Gaza, Jewish settlers shoot and wound 1 Palestinian youth and fire at journalists during a clash over land that has recently been fenced off and annexed to the Gush Qatif settlement bloc.<br><br>The UN cancels a planned mission to Israel to discuss the building of settlements in East Jerusalem because of what it calls unacceptable conditions imposed by Israel.<br><br>Hakam Subhi Qamhawi dies in Jericho Prison while in PNA custody. | |
| 20 June 1997 | The Israeli army requests US$100 million to fortify settlements throughout the West Bank and Gaza Strip and to make improvements for Israeli troops serving in the area.<br><br>Israeli soldiers firing rubber bullets wound about 20 Palestinians during the seventh day of street battles with Arab demonstrators in the divided West Bank town of Hebron, say witnesses. | |
| 24 June 1997 | Abed Radwan dies in Gaza Prison, marking the 13th death of a prisoner in PNA custody. | |
| 26 June 1997 | | I return to London and Canada for summer vacation. End of meetings with "returnees". |

Source: Adapted from Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs (PASSIA)website (http://www.passia.org)

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